

NAQCC NEWS

ISSUE 212 FEBRUARY 2016



KEY CLICKS

● **2015 PARTICIPATION AWARD WINNER N1JI.** Every year FISTS, the Morse Code Preservation Society, donates a free membership that we award to the NAQCC member who has the highest participation point total in our sprints and challenges. For 2015 we had 4 members who each earned the maximum possible 36 points - N1JI, W2JEK, K3WWP, and N8XMS. N8XMS and W2JEK are past winners of the award and were not eligible for the 2015 prize. A random drawing was then held and N1JI, was the winner. Congratulations to Jock on his award. (By the way, Jock is following in the footsteps of K3WWP and has gone for more than a year making at least one QRP CW contact each day.) We want to express our thanks to FISTS for donating the prize and for joining with us in the promotion of CW on the ham bands. The details on how participation points are awarded can be found at http://www.naqcc.info/awards_participation.html.

● **THERE ARE SOME CHALLENGE SUBMISSION ISSUES THAT WE NEED TO FIX.** We have a lot of volunteers who are hard at work behind the scenes to make the NAQCC the great club that it is. One of those volunteers is Hap, K7HAP, who, among other things, processes all of our monthly challenge submissions. There is actually a surprising amount of work that must be done for those submissions and when one is submitted in an incorrect format it just adds to the time and effort required. So in the *Challenges* section of this newsletter we review the common submission mistakes that Hap sees every month and the simple things that you can do to make his life a lot easier.

● **SOME IMPORTANT CHANGES ARE IN THE WORKS.** For many years John, KK1X, has been quietly serving the NAQCC behind the scenes in a variety of rolls. Recently John started a new job and the demand on his available time requires some reduction to his NAQCC work. John will still be responsible for our awards program and certificates, and for the welcome letters that are sent out to new members. But his management of our member picture gallery (http://www.naqcc.info/pictures_gallery.html) will now be done by our newest club volunteer Lyle, AF7OS, (welcome aboard Lyle!). So if you would like to include your picture in our gallery it should be sent to Lyle. You can find his contact information at <http://www.naqcc.info/contactus.html>.

John was also involved with the processing of changes and updates to the member information that we keep in our database and this work will now be taken over by Dave, VA3RJ, who was already processing our new member applications and who also maintains our master membership database. With more than 8000 members, maintaining this database is a huge job and we are taking some

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steps to streamline the work and make it more manageable for Dave. One of the major things that we have done is to develop an on-line form that you can use to self-report any changes in your membership data. Using this form you can let us know about things like a new “vanity” callsign, change of address, a new email address, or even the passing of a member as a silent key. The information will automatically be sent to Dave and he will then be able to update our records efficiently. You can find a link to this **MEMBER UPDATES** form on the home page for our website at <http://www.naqcc.info/>.

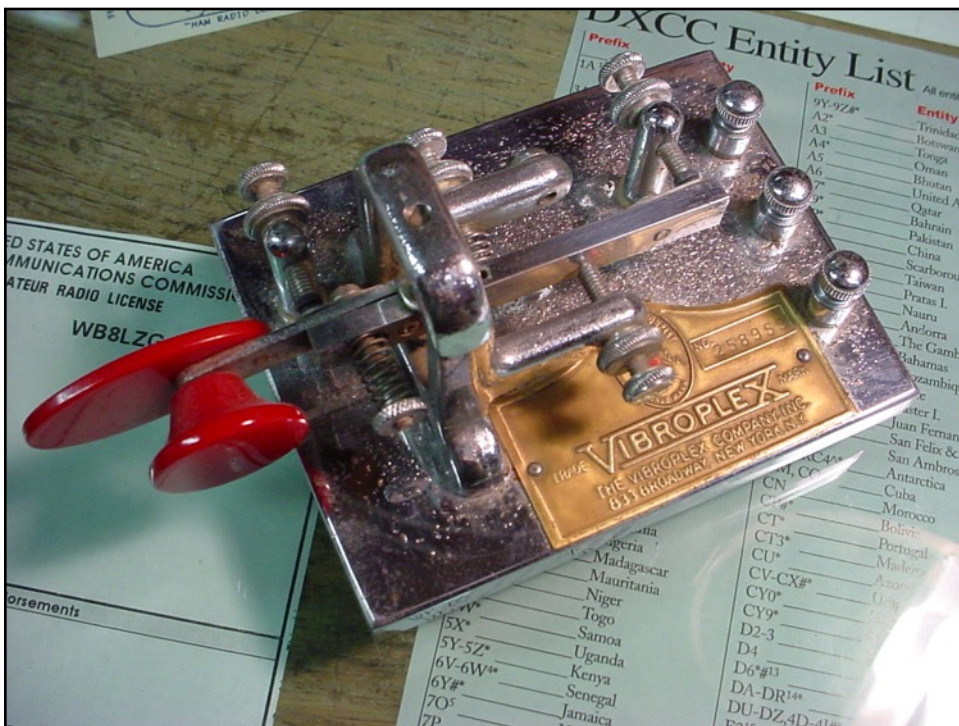
Let me close by thanking John, Dave, Lyle, and indeed all of our NAQCC volunteers (all 32 of them!) for the great work that they are doing. The NAQCC would literally not exist without them.

- **FOURTH QUARTER 2015 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE PRIZE WINNER IS K3WWP.** The final winner in our year long membership drive, as determined by the greatest number of entries in the “referred by” field in new member applications, is John, K3WWP. His prize is a gift certificate for 100 free QSL cards from <http://cheapqsls.com/naqcc.html>. Congratulations to John and a reminder to all of us that even though the membership drive is now over we all need to keep “talking up” the NAQCC.
- **OUR TWELFTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION IS IN THE WORKS.** Plans are already under way for our club’s 12th anniversary celebration in October of this year. Special callsigns have been reserved and we will be recruiting operators from all over the country to put those calls on the air. Details will be announced here and on our webpage at http://www.naqcc.info/main_n3a.html as they become available. *For now, be sure to make yourself eligible for the great prizes that will be given away by regularly participating in our monthly challenges and sprints.*
- **TEAM SPIRIT STRONG IN THE NAQCC.** Recently I sent out an email asking for a volunteer to help with our web picture gallery. Within two hours I had almost a dozen emails come in from people offering to help and several more continued to come in throughout the day. It’s that team spirit of volunteerism that makes this club so great. Thank you!
- **MARCH NEWSLETTER WILL BE DELAYED.** Due to some personal travel plans the March issue of this newsletter will be delayed about a week from it’s normal publishing schedule. It should be available around the 10th or 11th of the month.
- **CHECK OUT OUR MONTHLY POLLS.** Jerry, VE6CPP, puts up an interesting poll on our club website each month. You can cast your vote in the current poll and see past poll results using the links on the main club page <http://www.naqcc.info/>. The more people that cast a vote, the more interesting the results.
- **THANK YOU FOR THE DONATIONS!** A big “THANK YOU” goes out to everyone who has made a recent donation to the NAQCC treasury. The NAQCC has no membership dues and we depend on your generous donations to cover our operating expenses. If others would like to help out with a donation there are two ways that you can do it. The first way is to use *PayPal* to electronically send your contribution to Club Vice President John, N8ZYA, using the email found on the last page of this newsletter. To avoid any additional fees please be sure to check the box that says “*I’m sending money to family or friends.*” Also please add a note indicating that this is a donation to the NAQCC and include your call sign. The second way to make a donation is to mail a check or money order made out to *The North American QRP CW Club* and send it to *John Smithson, 1529 Virginia St E, Charleston, WV 25311*. Assuming that we have your correct email address on file, your contribution will be acknowledged by email with a carbon copy sent to a second club officer as a “check and balance.”



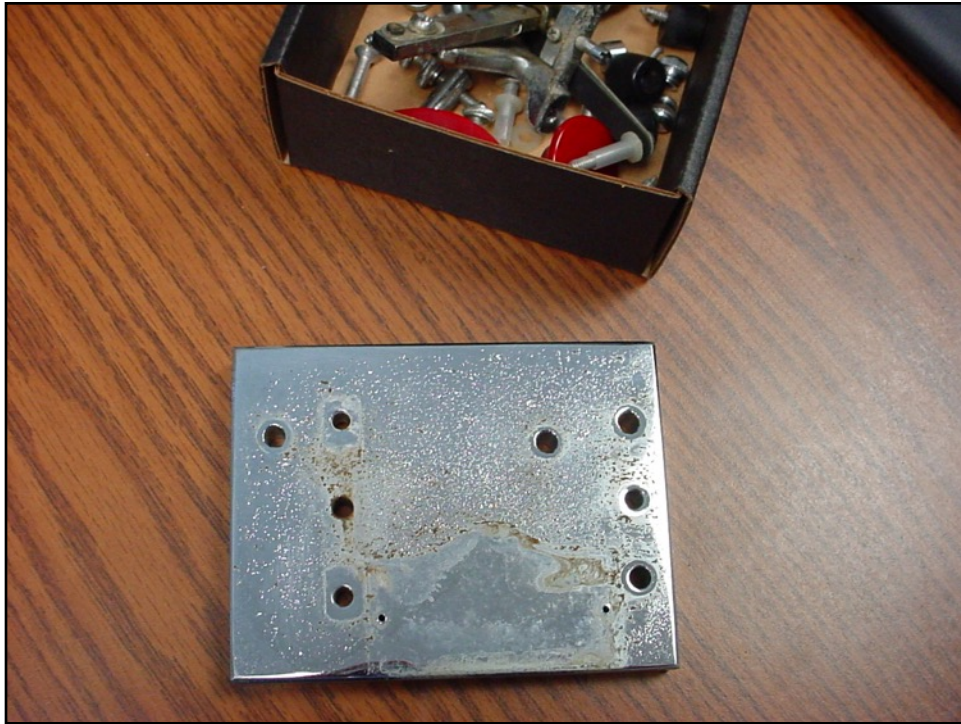
ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST BY GREGG, WB8LZG

Well it happened again. I wasn't looking for it, didn't need it, but I went and bought another old Vibroplex Key. I spied it at the Lansing Swapfest just sorta calling to me. It was obviously stored somewhere damp and dank because it had a bad case of rust and pitting in the chrome. After a bit of haggling the key came home with me. I figured, at the worst, I could use it for a "parts key". I attempted to clean it up a bit to see if she would "polish up", but the rust was too far advanced for a good finish. I'd been painting some key bases as of late to refurb some Vibroplex's with good results, so I figured I'd "give 'er a try". I thought about having it re-chromed, but "no, too much money", and the object was to "keep it cheap".

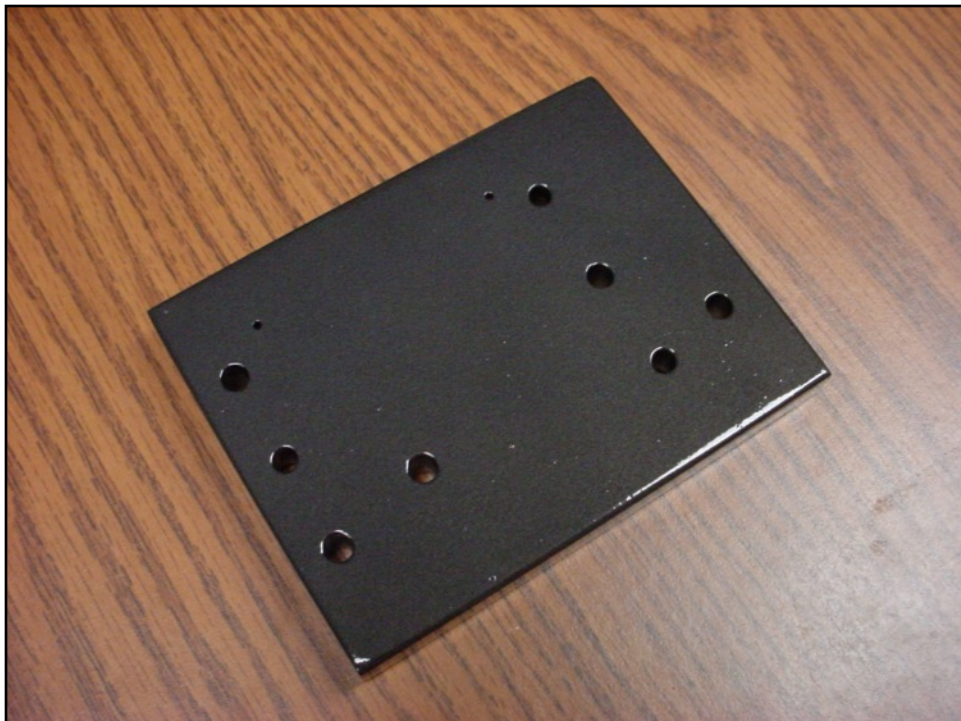


This is the "before" picture, after a cleanup.

I hated to "sand off" the chrome, but oh well, here goes! Once the rust spots were sanded out, I gave it 2 coats of Rustolium TM black hammered finish paint. The rest of the chrome parts polished up OK with a bit of rubbing compound and "elbow grease." Not quite as pretty as some other key refurb's I've done, but this one was in very poor condition to start with. The end result is a keeper. It will make a good "travel key". One I won't worry about too much if it gets a "ding" or two during use.



Here's a shot with all of the parts removed.



After 2 coats of paint.

The final result is a nice looking refurb, that has a very FB “feel”. This one may be “gifted” to an aspiring CW op.

Hope you enjoyed the pictures. 73 Gregg



UGLY CONSTRUCTION

BY GENE, N5GW

AN ADVENTURE WITH GROUND PLANE ("UGLY") CONSTRUCTION

There are many good articles on "ugly" circuit board construction including versions such as ground plane, Manhattan and cut pad. However few give specific details on the techniques.

Ground plane construction (GPC) is probably the fastest and easiest way to assemble a circuit. Its value has been enhanced in recent years by the widespread availability of digital cameras. I would like to share some of my ideas and experiences with this type of circuit board construction.

First take a pic of the desired simple circuit diagram using your cell phone or other digital camera. Make sure the pic includes the circuit name and source for future reference. Also you may want to take a pic of the circuit description. Technically in some cases this may be a violation of copyright laws, but unless you try to share, distribute or sell the copies, you will be OK (no one need ever know).

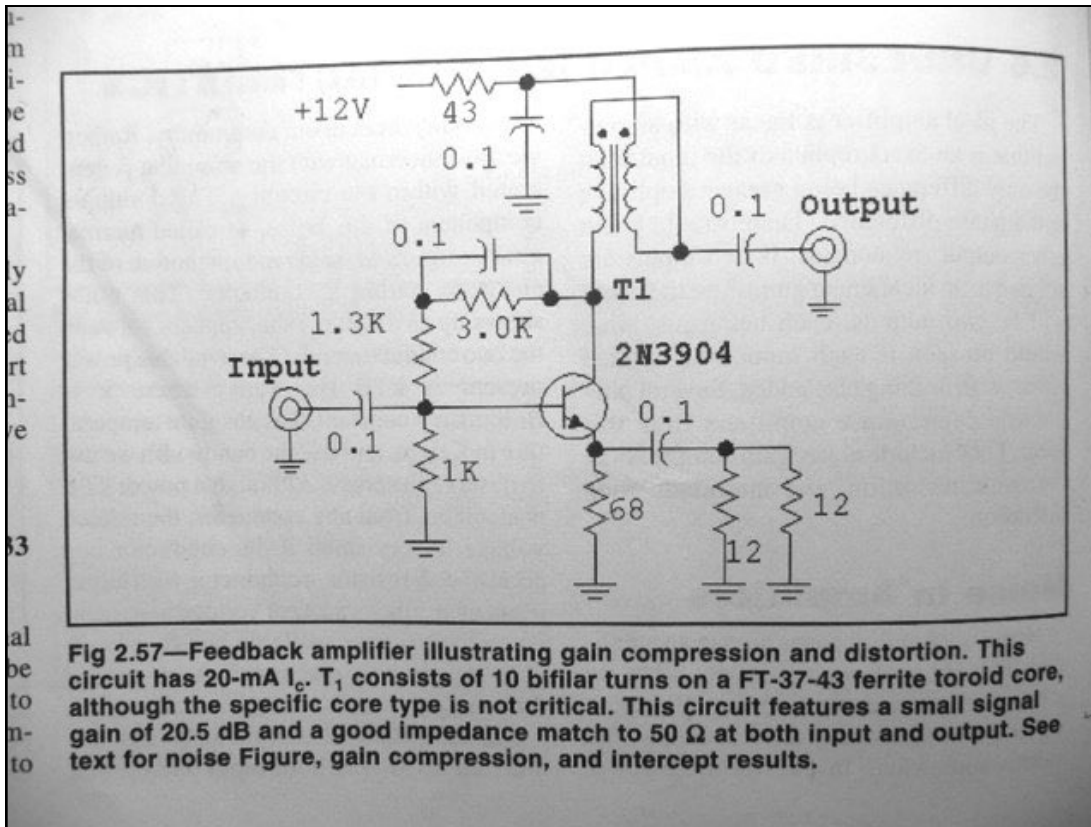
Next collect the components and test them. Then lay out the components adjacent to a ruler in the approximate positions they will occupy on the circuit board and snap a pic. This allows you to see what size/shape board will be needed. This small board can be cut out of a larger board using a hacksaw, straight edge and box cutter, or shears. I like to use the 0.03 inch double sided board, because it can be cut out with heavy duty scissors. Sand off the sharp edges and clean the board using metal polish such as Brasso, a cleanser such as Ajax or Comet, or even steel wool. Mark the top of the board with a "T" to keep yourself oriented.

Components are soldered directly to the board whenever possible and are supported by their leads, keeping them as short as possible. If the leads to be connected are first tinned, they may be held together and touched with the iron to complete the solder joint. If an insulated stand-off is needed, use a high ohmage (5-10 meg) one half or one quarter watt resistor. Attach the larger and more central components first. If you run out of room, desolder components and move them around or start over. It is possible to enlarge the area by soldering on a small rectangular piece of board. Also if the board turns out to be too large, it can be trimmed down.

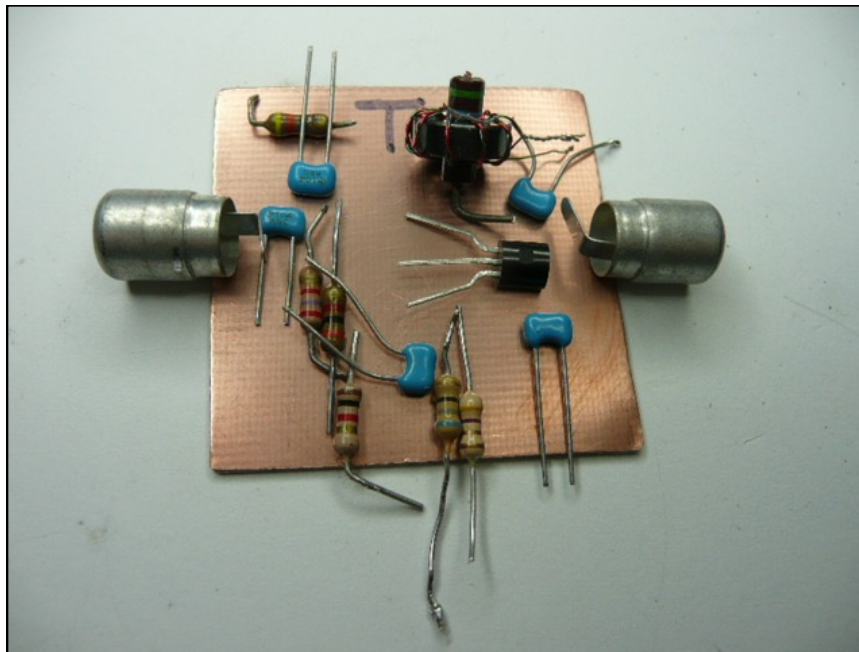
After mounting all parts, recheck the circuit for errors, shorts, etc. Then you are ready to test it. If it works as planned, take additional pics from different angles in case you wish to build additional modules at a later date.

Here's an example. Let's build a version of the broadband feedback rf amplifier described in Fig. 2-57 of EMRFD (first pic). It has 50 ohm input and output impedance, high gain (20+ db) and a fair noise figure. It is designed for 12 volts but will work on 9 volts.

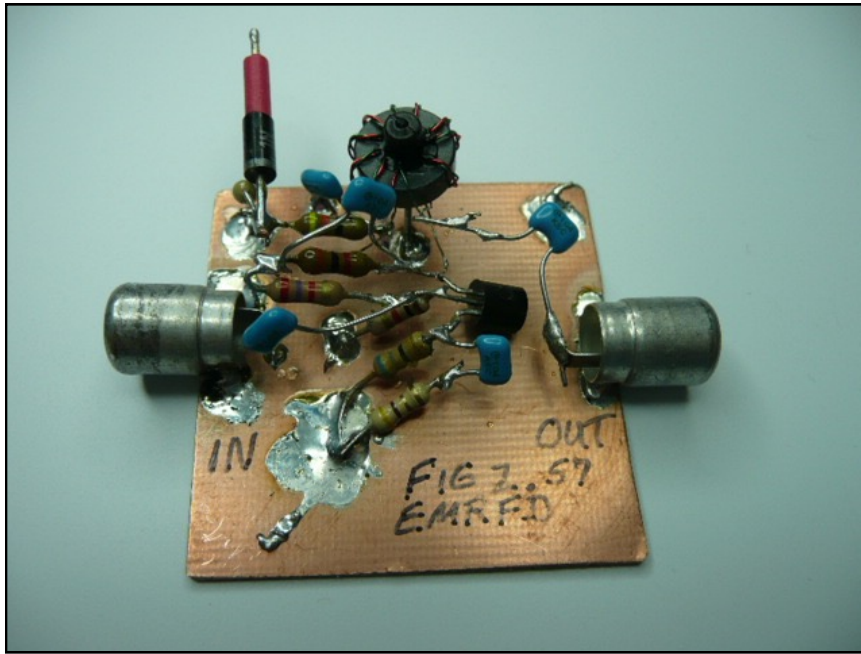
(The schematic shown on the next page is reprinted with permission from Experimental Methods in RF Design, by Hayward, Campbell, and Larkin, copyright 2003-2009 by the ARRL.)



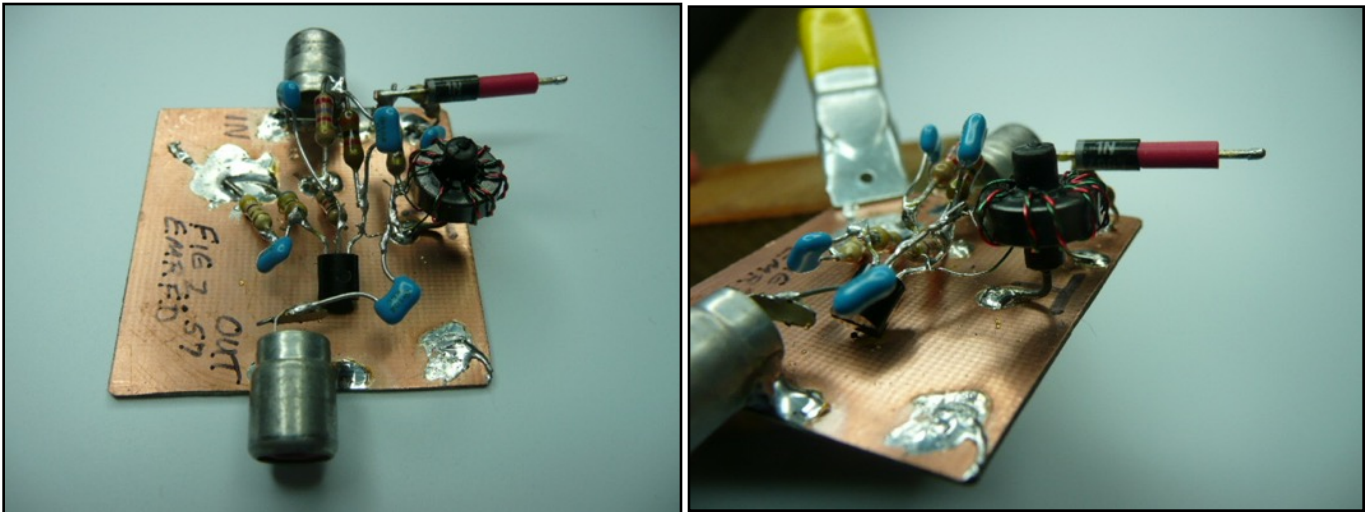
The second pic shows the components laid out on a 4 X 4 cm. board in their approximate positions.



The third pic demonstrates components soldered to the board, including connections for power supply, input and output. A klutz (reverse polarity protection) diode has been added. I like to use the RCA connectors because they are cheap, compact and work well at hf.

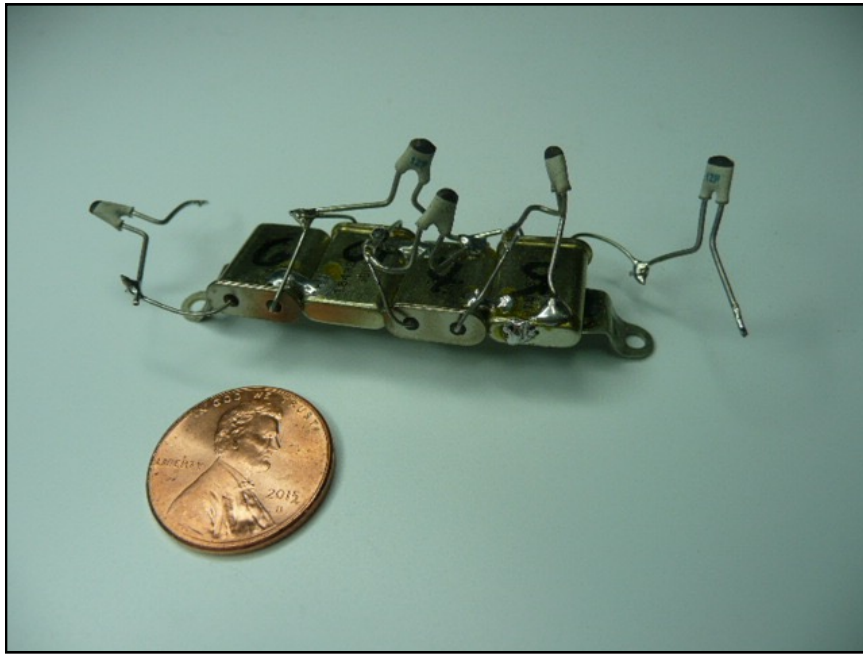


The fourth and fifth pics illustrate views from different angles, including how the ferrite transformer is mounted.



You can test it by inserting it between your antenna and receiver and noticing a considerable increase in signal strength. The circuit can be incorporated in a homebrew receiver or can be placed in a small enclosure for use as a piece of test equipment.

A sixth pic reveals another twist on GPC - A Cohn ladder crystal filter assembled by simply soldering the crystal bodies together without using a circuit board. Supporting feet are made from bent solder lugs.



The pics preserve the schematic diagram and circuit description, aiding in parts substitution, modifications or trouble shooting. If you later decide to build additional modules, the pics can serve as pictorials. Or you can use an existing completed board as an "ultimate pictorial"!

BE A CW ELMER

AN EDITORIAL BY PAUL, N8XMS

As was recently announced here in the newsletter, Ron, N9EE, has taken the initiative to form a new local NAQCC chapter in west Florida. A few days ago he submitted his report about their first organized outing (see *Chapter News*), and we emailed back and forth talking about the things that he is doing to promote the chapter. One of the things that he said was...

"With our posting on our FaceBook page I really hope it excites some to get involved. The major reason for not getting into this is they don't know the code, but this just might get them to learn it. There is a real interest. The guys with QRP rigs are starting to come out of the wood work."

That second sentence about many hams not knowing Morse code caught my eye and started me thinking - a dangerous thing I know! Of course we all know that CW, with it's power-efficiency, is the best mode for QRP operating. It far surpasses SSB at equivalent power levels for getting through when conditions are poor. The digital modes are also very good in conditions that are less than optimal but they usually require extra equipment like computers and/or keyboards and that is certainly a negative for portable operations. Besides all of that, CW is just plain fun!

Well, while I was thinking about all of this I recalled a conversation that I had many years ago at a local ham club meeting. We were having a break for refreshments and three or four of us CW ops were standing around shooting the breeze while we enjoyed our coffee and donuts. We were talking about some of the things that we had recently heard on the air - "Lake Erie swings," super-fast fists, surer-slow fists, and very bad fists. One of the guys, who is a very good CW op, said, "I hate to hear a bad fist! When I hear a crummy CQ I tune right passed it and look for something else." At the time I really didn't say anything but as I think about it now several points come to mind.

1. Do you really enjoy CW operating? - Yes
2. Do you like to receive as well as send? In other words, do you need somebody on the other end of the QSO? - Yes
3. Since Morse code is no longer a requirement for a ticket, do we need to encourage hams to give it a try so that there will continue to be plenty of people on the bands that we can talk to? - Yes
4. Were you ever a beginner who made some mistakes? - Yes
5. Is there any better way for improving a person's fist than with practice? - No
6. Can you think of any better way to encourage a CW beginner to continue to practice and improve, than to patiently have a QSO with them? - No

What I'm obviously driving at is the simple fact that if we really enjoy operating CW we should actively look for those beginners with the poor fists instead of avoiding them. Literally every time that you QRS to have a QSO with a beginning CW operator you have the opportunity to encourage them, elmer them, and preserve the mode that we all enjoy so much.

So start looking for those opportunities. A good place to begin is to check out the standard frequencies used by the SKCC ([Straight Key Century Club](#)) where many beginners often hang out. Perhaps make a personal goal of having at least 20% of your QSOs be with beginners. You might surprise yourself and actually find that you enjoy working those "crummy fists!"



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Each month one of our members is randomly selected and asked to share their ham radio biography with all of us. Questions or comments should go to Paul, KD2MX.

DISCLAIMER: Any views expressed in this section are those of the submitting member and may or may not be those of the NAQCC or its officers.

WILL JAACKS, NQ2W, #4839



Looking back, it seems like I have always had an interest in radio. As a youngster, I listened to my AM transistor radio, the family Magnavox hi-fi, or a Panasonic portable multi-band SW receiver. We had a set of channel 14 walkie talkies with a Morse code button - printed letters with dots and dashes so we could send audio code - but mostly, we just used them to talk.

In high school, I acquired a Midland 23-channel CB and bottom-loaded whip antenna. There was no power supply, so I hooked it up to our garden tractor's battery until I could afford to buy a power supply. Eventually, I bought a base antenna and spent hours talking on the CB.

New York's North Country winters took their toll on that base antenna and I had to take it down. After college, a brilliant idea came to me, build an antenna for that CB. That would be something to tinker with. A trip to the local library ended with me bringing home an edition of the ARRL Antenna Handbook. The world of amateur radio was there before my eyes!

Now, I always knew about ham radio, my uncle in California was a ham, and there was a ham radio club at college plus the local club set up a station at the Lewis County Fair. But it never dawned on me that I could actually be a ham, or that I wanted to be a ham.

There was a paragraph in the handbook that mentioned contacting local chambers of commerce to inquire about amateur radio classes. I did and there was. I was about two or three weeks behind. I had to learn Morse code, and quick. Where were those walkie talkies?

I remember the instructor, Don, WA2OEP(SK) shaking his head when I exclaimed walking into the class

"I learned all the letters of the alphabet. An "A" is dot-dash, a "B" is dash-dot-dot-dot..." I wish I knew then what I know now.

It seemed that it wasn't too difficult to unlearn that recognition system and I passed the Novice test with flying colors. The FCC sent me my call, KA2VAJ, and I was on my way. I soon upgraded to General, and then, Advanced class. Guess what? I tried for my Amateur Extra but failed the code exam. Actually, unlearning the visual letter recognition system wasn't that easy after all. More code practice and I did it - 20 wpm passed and I had my Extra. The FCC sent me NQ2W.

During this period, from the mid-80's to mid to late 90's, I was active on HF SSB and CW and 2-meter FM. Usually, I was running 100 watts on HF and whatever the 2-meter rig would deliver. I experimented with all kinds of antennas, from verticals to wires to beams on all kinds of supports. For HF, I eventually settled on a free-standing 60-foot tower with a 3-element tri-bander on top, a 40-meter quad loop, and an 80-meter dipole. My property had a great window to Africa and Europe, it was pretty much ham heaven.

I dabbled in chasing DX (never really chasing the paper) and contesting. Somewhere along the line, I picked up an HW-8 and I was hooked. I made sure the low power setting of my IC-745 was at four watts and I never looked back. Well, maybe a little, but the majority of my time was on HF CW QRP. A move from the "house on the hill" to one in town and other commitments necessitated a hiatus to HF activities.

A new job brought us to Albany in early 2004. For some reason (maybe a QST article on an attic antenna - I'm an ARRL Life Member so I have been reading QST for a long time), I made a New Year's resolution for 2006 - to make a CW QRP QSO. I practiced CW. A 40-meter dipole went up in the attic of our single-story ranch. I practiced CW. I fired up the IC-745 at four watts on March 15, 2006 and answered a CQ from P40D. A few minutes later, I worked EI9JF. I was hooked again. I practiced more CW.

A lot has happened since 2006. I practiced lots of CW. Radios and accessories have been built, bought, used, sold, kept, modified, tossed, and stored. Right now I'm firing up a Jupiter or a K1 with either a Bencher paddle, a homebrewed light-weight (mostly plastic) paddle, or the Vibroplex Know Code straight key that I won in an NAQCC drawing. I hope to someday soon connect the computer to the radio - someday.

The 40-meter dipole in the attic was replaced with a homebrewed ground mounted, near-bottom loaded vertical for 80-meters, a homebrewed 40-meter inverted vee up at 40 feet, and a 2-element mini-beam at 25 feet. The mini-beam is supported by a homebrewed 8-foot four-legged tower. It took a while to get this antenna garden together. And I continued to practice CW. It's nothing like the "house on the hill" but I'm pretty happy given the urban setting. The weakest link is the vertical - cramped for space and not enough room for a sufficient radial field.

Most of my radio time is spent listening. I enjoy chasing DX and getting QSLs via LoTW. I'm still not fond of chasing paper QSLs but I respond to those that I get. At the time of this writing, I have 153 DXCC confirmed on LoTW - all CW, all QRP. 10, 15, 20, and 40 meters are all over 100 confirmed. 80 only has 34, my weak link. I haven't applied for the DXCC certificate, yet. I'm not sure why. I have the WAS certificate for CW - all QRP - and I am working, although not seriously, for 5-band WAS, CW QRP. I'm pretty close on all bands with 15-meters lagging behind the other bands. The close by states are tough. I also worked and confirmed all the W1AW portable state operations - all CW, all QRP - during the centennial celebration. That was fun.

Even during contests and sprints, which I enjoy immensely, I'm listening. I'm calling when I think I can be heard but I'm mostly listening. I try to participate in as many contests and sprints as I can - all CW, all QRP. Sometimes I do okay. Sometimes, not so much, but it's always a fun challenge. I'm amazed when

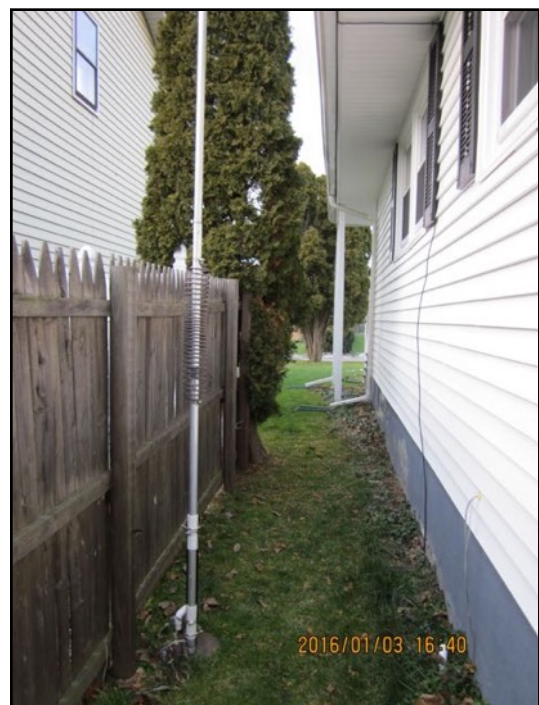
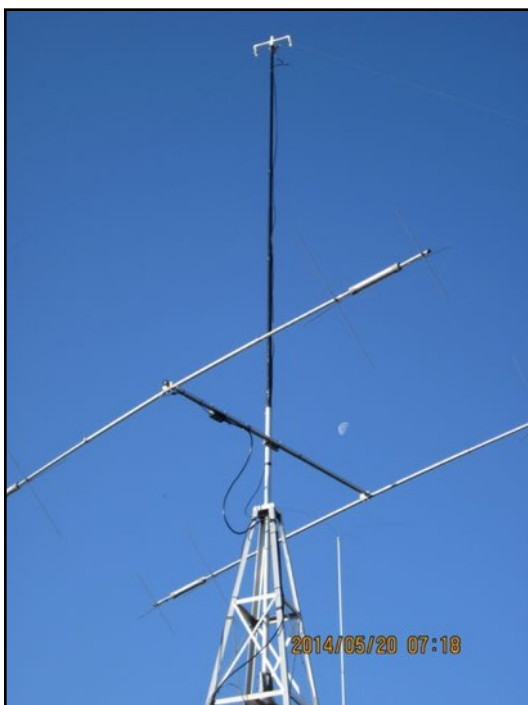
some stations hear me. They must have fantastic receivers and receive antennas. In any case, I'm glad they can.

I'm pretty sure that the bulk of my ham radio contacts, especially the most recent ones, are from contest/sprint QSOs. I've won some plaques and certificates for my efforts but they're not the goal of my participation. Don't get me wrong, they're nice and I'm proud when I see them in the mail, but I enjoy contesting because of the QSOs and the folks behind those QSOs - camaraderie. Making lots of QSOs from all over the world in a relatively short period of time is thrilling.

If I may opine, CW learners and users should practice and listen. The listening is the best practice. You don't need tapes or mp3 files, just listen on the air. Listen to a DX station running QSOs and copy the calls of those answered. Listen to a ragchewer. Listen to W1AW. I was first licensed in '84 and I'm still practicing and listening - learning and using. The visual recognition system I first learned has been a hurdle that I'm slowly, but surely, getting over. Don't give up, move at your own pace, and have fun.

When I'm not hamming, I'm doing something else. (Did Yogi Berra say that?) My XYL and I have been married for 21 years. I have two married step-children and three very young grandchildren. The something else often includes them, maybe one or more of the 2nd harmonics will get licensed, or other family. I enjoy puttering around the house doing minor fixer-uppers or major remodels; trying to play the guitar, fishing, and the great outdoors. Oh yeah, there's also work - the kind that you do for money - so I can do all the other stuff. Luckily, I have had and continue to have a wonderful career with no regrets.

I am looking forward to continuing my CW practice. We never know what the future can bring but if it includes family and friends, non-hams and hams, then it will be fine. I hope to listen to and be heard in many contests and sprints for years to come. I'm grateful for organizations like the ARRL, NAQCC, and FPqrp and hope I can someday reimburse them for their contributions to my enjoyment of this wonderful hobby. If we've met on the air, thank you for the QSO. If not, I hope we do soon. I don't always play radio, but when I do, it's CW QRP. Thank you for the privilege of being an NAQCCer.



NAQCC SPRINTS

CURRENT MONTH'S SPRINT: Our regular February sprint will be on Feb. 10, 2016, 0130-0330 UTC which is the evening of the 9th here in North America. Complete information about the sprint can be found at <http://www.naqcc.info/sprint201602.html>.

Please remember to strive for that perfectly formatted "SILVER LOG" submission. It really helps our log processing. Everything that you need to know about how to have a Silver Log can be found at <http://naqcc.info/GLCheckList.txt>.

Complete sprint rules and information on log submissions can be found at <http://naqcc.info/contests.html>.

We occasionally get questions from sprint participants about how to use the GenLog software to log and report their contacts. Most of the time the answers to these questions can be found in the excellent illustrated tutorial written by KB8FE and found at http://www.naqcc.info/sprint_genlog_tutorial.html. Alternatively, a logging spreadsheet for Mac OS X computer users is available at http://www.naqcc.info/sprint_macs.html.

LAST MONTH'S SPRINT RESULTS: In January we had two sprints. First up was our annual 160-meter sprint on the 13th. 38 logs were submitted for that special sprint, our lowest count since 2009, but soapbox reports indicate that the participants still had plenty of fun. About a week later, on the 21st, we had our regular monthly sprint and participation counts were also down for that one. Only 92 logs were submitted and it was the first time since January 2014 that we slipped below the 100-log mark. It was also our lowest number of logs since August 2011 when only 87 logs were submitted. So was it post-holiday recovery, bad band conditions, or perhaps both? I don't know but take a look at the soapbox comments and a recurring theme quickly pops out - no matter how bad the conditions were, participants had fun! If you didn't play in the sprint you definitely missed out. See you next month.

Complete sprint results, including soapbox comments, can be seen at http://www.naqcc.info/sprint201601_160.html and <http://www.naqcc.info/sprint201601.html> and summary information can be seen in the tables on the following pages.

We would especially like to welcome our first-time log reporters. In the 160-meter sprint: WB8YYY KE8DI VE3DQN AB1VL W3TS NS8Q AJ1DM W4OEP. In the regular monthly sprint: W2BJN WV8DH AF4HL AA4MI. We hope that you had a great time and will return often.

SWA STRAIGHT KEY CATEGORY			
Division	1st	2nd	3rd
W1	KN1H		
W2	KA2KGP		
W3	KQ3Z		
W4	K4JPN	WG8Y	WX4RM
W5	N5GW		
W6	KC6SSE		
W7	KC7DMM - N7KM (tie)		
W8	KE8DI	WB8LZG	
W9	W9CC		
W0	AA0W		
VE	VE2TH	VA3PEN	
DX			

SWA BUG CATEGORY			
Division	1st	2nd	3rd
W1			
W2	N2HTT		
W3	N3SW		
W4	AK4NY		
W5	NF5U		
W6			
W7			
W8	N8XMS		
W9	AA9L		
W0	NN0SS		
VE			
DX			

SWA KEYER/KEYBOARD CATEGORY			
Division	1st	2nd	3rd
W1	N1JI		
W2	N2ESE		
W3	KB3AAG		
W4	KU4A	N4MJ	
W5	N3CI		
W6			
W7	AA7CU		
W8	WA8SAN	K8AX	
W9	AB9YC		
W0	NO2D		
VE			
DX			

GAIN CATEGORY			
KEY==>	SK	BUG	K/K
	NQ2W	KF6C	

FIRST TIME ENTRANT HIGH SCORE			
KEY==>	SK	BUG	K/K
	AF4HL	WV8DH	W2BJN
PRIZE DRAWING WINNER			
WI5H			

	Current Month	Previous Month	All-Time Record	Record Date
Logs	92	110	194	2/13
Participants	135	184	269	2/13
Total QSOs	1082	1905	2804	2/13
Hour 1 QSOs	571	982	1468	2/13
Hour 2 QSOs	511	923	1334	2/13
20m QSOs	41	340	1232	8/13
40m QSOs	559	1499	1534	4/12
80m QSOs	482	66	1417	2/13
Avg QSOs/Station	11.8	17.3	19.3	9/11

SPRINT HONOR ROLL: We honor the following members for their outstanding participation over the years in our regular sprints. Exact counts can be seen at http://naqcc.info/sprint_dates.html.

NUMBER OF SPRINTS	MEMBERS
50+	AA7CU NA4O N8BB KC2EGL VE5BCS N2ESE K6CSL N8QY WA8SAN N0TA WX4RM WD0K K4KRW NQ2W KB8FE NO2D WY3H AA9L KQ1P W4DUK KE5YUM WB8ENE WA2JSG K1IEE N4FI VE3FUJ KD0V NU7T
75+	K3RLL NF8M KU4A K4JPN K4NVJ N8XMS KD2MX K4BAI KB3AAG
100+	WB8LZG W2SH W9CC W2JEK
125+	KA2KGP K3WWP

SWA STRAIGHT KEY CATEGORY 160M SPRINT			
Division	1st	2nd	3rd
W1	KN1H		
W2	W2SH		
W3	W3TS		
W4	WG8Y	K4BAI	
W5	N5GW		
W6			
W7			
W8	KE8DI		
W9	W9CC		
W0	WB0PYF		
VE	VE3DQN		
DX			

SWA BUG CATEGORY 160M SPRINT			
Division	1st	2nd	3rd
W1	W1FMR		
W2			
W3	K3WWP		
W4	WA2EDN		
W5			
W6			
W7			
W8			
W9			
W0			
VE			
DX			

SWA KEYSER/KEYBOARD CATEGORY 160M SPRINT			
Division	1st	2nd	3rd
W1	AB1VL		
W2	N2ESE		
W3	WB8YYY		
W4	N4MJ		
W5			
W6			
W7	W4OEP		
W8	AB8FJ		
W9	K9FO		
W0	N0AR		
VE			
DX			

GAIN CATEGORY 160M SPRINT			
KEY==>	SK	BUG	K/K

FIRST TIME ENTRANT HIGH SCORE 160M SPRINT			
KEY==>	SK	BUG	K/K
	KE8DI		WB8YYY
PRIZE DRAWING WINNER 160M SPRINT			
WA2EDN			



NAQCC CHALLENGES

CURRENT MONTH'S CHALLENGE: In February we often turn to Punxsutawney Phil to let us know how long winter will last. But Phil is not the only animal weather forecaster, he just has a better publicity team. There are actually many animals that if carefully observed can predict coming meteorological events, and we have a list of them for our alphabet challenge this month. You can find the list along with complete challenge rules at <http://www.naqcc.info/challenges201602.html>. Spoiler... Next month we will publish some information about how these animal prognosticators actually make their predictions.

The European challenge is an alphabet challenge involving some European rivers. Details can be found at <http://naqcc-eu.org/eu-challenges/february-2016-challenge>.

NEXT MONTH'S CHALLENGE: In March we will have an interesting challenge to have a little variety in your QSOs by using two different types of keys to make your Morse code. You can find the list of key types and complete challenge details at <http://www.naqcc.info/challenges201603.html>.

The European challenge in March will get all of us "thinking spring" with an alphabet challenge working with the names of some famous European gardens. Complete details are at <http://naqcc-eu.org/eu-challenges/march-2016-challenge>.

Complete information about our challenges including a helpful tutorial on how to organize your work for an alphabet challenge can be found at <http://naqcc.info/challenges.html>. Detailed general rules for our challenges can be found at http://naqcc.info/challenges_rules.html.

LAST MONTH'S CHALLENGE: The deadline for submitting entries for the January Mardi Gras challenge is still a few days away so final results are not yet available. You can go to <http://www.naqcc.info/challenges.html> to see what has been posted so far, and the final results will also be posted there shortly after the 10th of the month.

The European challenge results will be available at <http://naqcc-eu.org/eu-challenges/january-2016-challenge>.

WE NEED YOUR HELP! We are thrilled with every challenge submission that we receive but we continue to get submissions, particularly for our alphabet challenges, in formats that are difficult for us to process. So let's take a moment to talk about some of the important issues that keep popping up.

First there is the spaces-in-the-words issue. Sometimes some of our alphabet challenge "words" are actually phrases that include spaces in them. For example, we might be challenged to find callsigns to make the name "HIRAM P MAXIM." When you have something like this simply ignore the spaces and treat it as if "HIRAMP MAXIM" is the actual "word" to make - *they are not separate words*.

A second issue that we frequently deal with is the vertical-format problem. Your alphabet submission is to be made in a horizontal format and not a vertical one. Specifically, each challenge word is to be on a separate line with the callsigns that form that word listed horizontally in that same line. For example:

RADIO - AB3RU AB3RU KB1WOD K4BAI KB1WOD
 GLOW BUG - KM4GRG W5WIL NA4O W1AW N8BB AB3RU WB8LZG
 etc.

Also notice that there is no need for any special symbol, other than a space, to separate the callsigns forming the different words.

Finally, there is the non-text file issue. You might have developed some sort of great spreadsheet that helps you organize your alphabet challenge work, but if you use that for your challenge submission you make a lot of extra work for our processor. We need your submission as a simple text file - *nothing more!* That can be a text file attached to your email or you can simply type your submission directly into your email.

So please participate in our challenges and please help us out by making your submission in the correct format. Thanks and 73.

The complete challenge rules can be found at http://naqcc.info/challenges_rules.html.

CHALLENGE HONOR ROLL: We honor the following members for their outstanding participation over the years in our monthly challenges. Exact counts can be seen at http://www.naqcc.info/challenges_schedule.html.

NUMBER OF CHALLENGES	MEMBERS
25+	KD2MX N1LU KD0V K9OSC VE3HUR KU4A WY3H
50+	K1YAN VE3FUJ NU7T K1IEE
75+	N8XMS W2JEK
100+	
125+	K3WWP



NAQCC AWARDS

We have an extensive list of awards that you can earn. Complete details can be found at <http://naqcc.info/awards.html>.

FEATURED AWARD: SUFFIX WORDS AWARD

This month we would like to talk about an award that many of you probably already qualify for - the Suffix Words Award. The idea of this award is simple, just use QRP and CW (duh) to work stations with call signs that spell out words with the letters that are after the number (the suffix). For example K9**IT**, KB5**FOG**, or W1**MOO**. (All of the letters in the suffix must be used - W5ISX would not give the word "IS.") To remove any debate about whether or not something is a real word we use the official list of 2 and 3 letter words from the National Scrabble Association. Collecting 50 such call signs will earn you a certificate. You can find the complete details about this award, along with the list of accepted words, at http://www.naqcc.info/awards_words.html.

RECENTLY ISSUED AWARDS:

2015 Participation Award

W1	N1JI	36	01/14/16
W2	W2JEK	36	01/14/16
W3	K3WWP	36	01/14/16
W4	AK4NY	16	01/14/16
W5	KG5HCF	15 (tie)	01/14/16
W5	WI5H	15 (tie)	01/14/16
W6	WH7TT	11	01/14/16
W7	K9JWV	30	01/14/16
W8	N8XMS	36	01/14/16
W9	N9SE	15	01/14/16
W0	KD0V	27	01/14/16
VE	VE3FUJ	24	01/14/16
DX	PA0XAW	11	01/14/16

WAVE Award by K1YAN

0005 - K1IEE	01/20/16
0006 - W3UEC	01/20/16

Endorsements:

Nanavut	
0005 - K1IEE	01/20/16



NAQCC QRS/QRQ NETS



We have a number of nets (QRS = slow speed, QRQ = higher speed) designed to help people build up their CW operating skills. Complete information about these nets can be found at http://naqcc.info/cw_nets.html. Questions should be directed to Net Manager Scotty, NU0S.

NAQCC NET SCHEDULE

Net	Local Time	UTC	Freq +/-	Primary NCS
East Texas QRS Net (ETN)	Monday 7 PM CT	Tuesday 0100 Z	3560 KHz	Allen, KA5TJS (in TX)
Farnsworth 40 m QRQ Net (FRN)	Sunday 5 PM PT	Monday 0100 Z	7065 KHz	Rick, N6IET (in CA)
Farnsworth 80 m QRQ Net (FRN)	Sunday 7 PM PT	Monday 0300 Z	3556 KHz	Rick, N6IET (in CA)
Farnsworth 80m QRQ Net (FRN)	Monday 8 PM PT	Tuesday 0400 Z	3565 KHz	J.B., NR5NN (in CA)
Midwest Net QRS Net (MWN)	Monday 9 PM CT	Tuesday 0300 Z	7117 KHz	Scotty, NU0S (in NE)
Rocky Mtn Regional/Continental QRS Net (RMRc)	Tues/Thurs 4 PM MT	Tues/Thurs 2300 Z	7062.5 KHz	Dale, WC7S (in WY)
Rocky Mtn Regional/Continental QRS Net (RMRc)	Tues/Thurs 4:30 PM MT	Tues/Thurs 2330 Z	14062.5 KHz	Dale, WC7S (in WY)
West Virginia QRS Net (WVN)	Wednesday 9 PM ET	Thursday 0200 Z	7117 KHz	John, N8ZYA (in WV)
Pacific Northwest 80 m QRS Net (PNW80)	Thursday 7 PM PT	Friday 0300 Z	3574 KHz	Stewart, KE7LKW (in WA)
Great Lakes QRS Net (GLN)	Thursday 9 PM ET	Friday 0200 Z	3534 KHz	David, KE8DI (in MI)

Note: On the rare occasions that there is a conflict between one of our scheduled nets and one of our regular sprints the sprint will take precedence.

From Net Manager Scotty, NU0S

Hello everybody first I want to thank all the net control operator's. Next I want to thank all net control participants for checking in and supporting the NAQCC CW nets. Please remember this is for you members and non-members alike to gain experience, confidence and spread the good cheer and gain new membership... It is a true pleasure to chat with everyone on a regular net schedule. Hey follow me on Twitter @NU0Slong for live net updates and QRP CW in the field...Please contact me anytime with questions or concerns with any of our NAQCC Scheduled Nets...72/73 Scotty Long NU0S NAQCC 3715 MWN NCS / Nets Manager-Coordinator.

Quick Notes from our Net Control Station Professional Ops!!!

01-04-2016 NAQCC Farnsworth Net (FRN) Richard (Rick) Stutsman N6IET, California

40 Meters (5:00 - 5:29 p.m. PST) the band was already going long, and Mike started to fade out at 7:15 when he had to QRT and take his bread out of the oven. Mark and John were strong to me but not to each other, and we exchanged signal and weather reports and then closed the net and informally QSY'ed to 3556 kHz, where I could barely hear either Mark or John, but they could hear each other pretty well until we QRT'd at 5:46 p.m. PST. 80 Meters (7:00 - 7:35 p.m. PST) Charles checked in QRP with a 369 RST and then went QRO for a 479 signal report from me. I think Mark did the same, starting at 359 and coming up to 599. Or maybe our path improved. John was 359 from further away. John and I always do better on 40 meters than 80 meters. We gave up at 7:35, but Charles suggested we try PSK31 at 3580 kHz. There we were able to continue our QSO till 8pm, and Doug, K7KY joined us. Doug said our signals were poor copy on CW earlier and so didn't check in to FRN. Don't forget to check into FRN this evening (Monday) at 8pm PST on 3565 kHz. 72/73 de Rick N6IET

01-11-2016 NAQCC Farnsworth Net (FRN) Richard (Rick) Stutsman N6IET, California

40 Meters (5:00 - 6:00 p.m. PST) K = 2 and NVIS MUF = 6 MHz and falling All initially had strong signals, but the band immediately started going long, and within 15 or 20 minutes John W7SAG and I were the only ones that could hear each other. Charles KW7G reported the untimely onset of a neighbor's plasma TV QRM. A few minutes later, my neighbor turned on their plasma TV, which also emits a buzz on the net frequency. A few minutes later Charles reported that I dropped like a stone into oblivion. John relayed Charles' 73s to me. Polar Bear Rick N7HRK/M reported sauna conditions in his local stream where he and his polar bear friends enjoyed a dip in 37.5° F water - balmy! (Brrrrr!)... 80 Meters (7:00 - 7:34 p.m. PST) K = 2 and NVIS MUF = 3 MHz and falling Mike KE6EE was S7 at first (1dB below my noise level but copiable). Mark started out at S8. By the time John checked back in, the band had gotten quite long. Twenty minutes into the net we were all having trouble copying each other, so I closed the net. One thing I announced during both nets was my having received my Weber (KD1JV) Tri-Bander QRP kit from Pacific Antenna yesterday. I started clearing off my dining table today in order to use it as my kit-building workbench, and in the process I came across some old ham radio file folders from my previous incarnation as N9EX in the 1990s. When I got back into ham radio a year ago after being QRT for 21 years ago I wondered what had happened to two mobile rigs and two HTs that I had owned in the 90s. I couldn't remember having sold them. Well, in those file folders I found the original owners manuals for all 4 radios, along with manuals for a few other accessories that I found missing when I got my equipment out of storage a year ago. Plus I had unpacked a Kenwood microphone last year (in a different box) that matched one of the missing radios. I wouldn't have sold the radios without the manuals or the microphone, so the radios must have been stolen, probably while I was packing the U-Haul truck for my move to Los Angeles from Illinois in 1993. And I think I know who might have done it. All that equipment was in a single moving box labelled "VHF Radios" sitting in the truck, which I may have left unlocked overnight during several days of loading my books, equipment and furniture into it. I think my psychopathic ham buddy came for a midnight visit and exploited his opportunity to stock up on his favorite kind of gear (He was only interested in VHF and UHF). I never saw that box again during the several occasions when I moved my stuff from one storage place to another.

72/73 de Rick N6IET

01-18-2016 NAQCC Farnsworth Net (FRN) Richard (Rick) Stutsman N6IET, California

40 Meters (5:00 - 5:13 p.m. PST) JB NR5NN was 579 at first but QSB'ed quickly to 349 as the band went long as it usually does after sunset, so we decided to close the net and QSY to 80 meters. John W7SAG at 459 checked out after a few minutes to eat dinner. JB and I talked on 80 meters for another 40 minutes, but slow, deep QSB still plagued us...80 Meters (7:00 - 7:56 p.m. PST) Band conditions were generally good, but with slow QSB. John W7SAG gradually went from 579 to 359. He reported icy conditions in Eagle, ID. Doug K7KY checked in and out with a 589 signal. Stewart KE7LKW joined us from a campsite on the Snake River (I think) QRP using his KX3 with an end-fed wire and Hendricks tuner. He reported it was raining outside his tent. He gave me some advice regarding painting the cabinet of my still unbuilt Weber Tri-Bander kit. At some point JB was hearing both Stewart and John better than I was, so I asked him to act as NCS for a while. By the end, however, I was hearing both John and Stewart better than JB was. I really appreciate my FRN CW friends. I often run into one or another of them on 80 or 40 meters in the mornings. We're all rag chewers, a rarity on CW, these days. This morning it was Rob N6KIX. And I often hear Polar Bear Rick N7HRK/M at 7046. Don't forget FRN again this evening at 0400z on 3565 kHz with JB NR5NN back as NCS.

72/73 de Rick N6IET

01-26-2016 NAQCC Farnsworth Net (FRN) Richard (Rick) Stutsman N6IET, California

40 Meters (5:00 - 5:52 p.m. PST) the propagation gods must have been pretty angry this evening. QSB was very deep and the band was long even before sunset. I don't think I could have copied anybody closer than 600 miles. Did any of you in the bay area try to check in? John says he worked K6P, finally. Polar Bear Rick reported another balmy dip in the creek at 36° F with his polar bear friends today. I hope Mark had a great QSO with his son Mike after the net! Doug was In & Out with a good signal.

He has another net, I believe. I took my FT-857 out onto the balcony for this session to exercise it along with the solar panels and the marine battery, which have been lonely and bored for the past two or three months. 80 Meters (7:00 - 7:49 p.m. PST) John WB6UBK was using one of his vintage Kenwoods - this time his TS-940S. I think he collects old classics. He says they follow him home from various ham fests. Charles worked K6P on 20 meter SSB and CW and VP8STI on 40 meter CW. Congrats! John W7SAG's signal was copied mainly by the other John. Neither Charles nor I could copy him. I did this session back in my bedroom ham shack using my old faithful IC-761. My Weber Tri-Band QRP kit passed the first few tests, and I was able to align the DDS with WWV and center the mixer output in the IF filter bandpass. But the BFO doesn't work at all. So I'll be analyzing that before I can complete the tests and put the little bugger on the air. Don't forget to QNI tomorrow (Monday) evening at 8pm on 3565.

72/73 de Rick N6IET

01-05-2016 NAQCC Farnsworth Net (FRN) James (J.B.) Still NR5NN, California (Rick Stutsman N6IET)

We had a great net this evening! Everybody was 589 or 599 during the first round! When the band is in good shape, we have great wide-area coverage! Doug K7KY checked in and out so he could check into a digital net. We had two new check-ins: Welcome to Ray N6UG in Rocklin, CA, near Sacramento, and Neil W0YSE in Vancouver, WA! I've added them to the email list. (Feel free to request removal, and that goes for anybody.) Both Ray and John WB6UBK are associated with the W6SFM Club where Ray took some CW training. Ray, John, and Mike were all using bugs, this evening. Weather and signal reports were the main topics, along with an ant invasion that Mike KE6EE was dealing with today. I thought he was talking about some kind of antenna invasion, at first. Duh! I hope JB is having a great visit with family in Mississippi! I'll be NCS one more time next Monday evening. See ya'll then!

72/73 de Rick N6IET

01-12-2016 NAQCC Farnsworth Net (FRN) James (J.B.) Still NR5NN, California (Rick Stutsman N6IET)

It was just the two of us. Mike started out weak and then got really strong for a few minutes and then weak again. We are both embarking on kit building. Mike is building a panadapter kit for his rig, which entails surface-mount parts, and I'll be starting to build my Weber Tri-Bander. We also talked about bicycle riding and bicycle maintenance - whether to do our own work or farm it out to a bike shop. I used to do all my own maintenance, but living in an apartment restricts the use of solvents, and I've grown weary of getting my hands greasy. So I farm out most of the major maintenance. We noted that another member of our group, Rob, N6KIX, is also an avid bicyclist. As our signals faded, we decided to QRT and call the net at 20h30 PST. We look forward to JB's return as NCS next week. It has been a pleasure for me to take over for 3 weeks.

72/73 de Rick N6IET

01-19-2016 NAQCC Farnsworth Net (FRN) James (J.B.) Still NR5NN, California

Absolutely AWESOME net tonight! Thanks EVERYONE! Didn't count how many rounds, but covered a lot of topics. Everyone had good copy on all, completely different than last night this time. Rick has just gotta get going on his Weber Tri-Bander build, and paint it _____?? Special mention to camper Stewart - his KX3 and long wire working well on 80m. Glad to be back in the west and will be listening for 'ya.

72/3 de JB. NR5NN

01-26-2016 NAQCC Farnsworth Net (FRN) James (J.B.) Still NR5NN, California

WOW! Amazing how fast a band can go away on us! About 8:40pst every one went from solid, mostly S9, to right in the noise, R4 at best. Welcome to (for me) new comer N6UG/Ray in Rocklin, CA. Glad to have you join us. Conditions will improve, so Chas and Rick tell me, as the days get longer. Almost all head copy tonight so virtually no notes. However, there is Mike and his fixation with DIRT! And Chas reported on the VP8STI DXpedition disaster - glad everyone is safe; maybe they can retrieve equipment some time later. Thanks to all for your participation!

72/3 de JB. NR5NN

01-12-2016 NAQCC East Texas QRS Net (ETN) Allen Matthews KA5TJS, Texas

Both stations were QRP. The band was a little noisy but good copy on both.

Allen KA5TJS

01-19-2016 NAQCC East Texas QRS Net (ETN) Allen Matthews KA5TJS, Texas

Signals were far but not great. Danny N5DRG was testing out his new FT817 for the trip out to West TX to the Ft. Davis area for a QRP/SOTA weekend at the end of this month.

Steve WB0QQT gave me a 229 and he was 599! Don't understand that one?

Allen KA5TJS

01-26-2016 NAQCC East Texas QRS Net (ETN) Allen Matthews KA5TJS, Texas

We had a lot of QSB and the band was very weak at the start. Signals were 549. At the end we had 599+. Allen KA5TJS

01-28-2016 NAQCC West Virginia NET (WVN) John Smithson N8ZYA, West Virginia

Single check-in from John W8GDP. We talked about his upcoming trip to see his brother in Florida. Fort Myers is the summer home of Thomas Edison and Henry Ford. John says there is a great museum about Thomas Edison there. He will be gone the next two weeks. 73's John N8ZYA

NAQCC Great Lakes Net (GLN) David Moss KE8DI, Michigan

It's nice to have some new folks stopping by to check out the net. 80 meters seems to be working better propagation wise. We will probably stay there at least until daylight savings begins and we are not as far after dark. 73 Dave KE8DI.

NAQCC CW Net QNI Reports All Stations
January/2016 Please note: Dates are in UTC

NAQCC Farnsworth Net (FRN) Richard (Rick) Stutsman N6IET, California**40M, 7.065 MHz, 80M 3.556 MHz**

01-04-2016 40M QNI (4) NCS N6IET, KE6EE, W7SAG, WU7F
 01-04-2016 80M QNI (4) NCS N6IET, KW6G, WU7F, W7SAG
 01-11-2016 40M QNI (5) NCS N6IET, KW6G, W7SAG, N7HRK/M, WU7F
 01-11-2016 80M QNI (4) NCS N6IET, KE6EE, KW6G, W7SAG
 01-18-2016 40M QNI (3) NCS N6IET, NR5NN, W7SAG
 01-18-2016 80M QNI (5) NCS N6IET, CO-NCS NR5NN, W7SAG, K7KY, KE7LKW
 01-26-2016 40M QNI (5) NCS N6IET, W7SAG, N7HRK/M, K7KY, WU7F
 01-26-2016 80M QNI (4) NCS N6IET, WB6UBK, KW6G, W7SAG

NAQCC Farnsworth Net (FRN) James (J.B.) Still NR5NN, California**80M, 3.565 MHz**

01-05-2016 QNI (7) NCS N6IET, K7KY, KW6G, N6UG, WB6UBK, KE6EE, W0YSE
 01-12-2016 QNI (2) NCS N6IET, KE6EE
 01-19-2016 QNI (7) NCS NR5NN, N6IET, KE6EE, WU7F, W7SAG, KW6G, KE7LKW/P
 01-26-2016 QNI (6) NCS NR5NN, KW6G, N6UG, N6IET, KE6EE, W7SAG

NAQCC East Texas QRS Net (ETN) Allen Matthews KA5TJS, Texas**80M, 3.560 MHz**

01-12-2016 QNI (3) NCS KA5TJS, KE5YUM, N5DRG
 01-19-2016 QNI (6) NCS KA5TJS, KE5YUM, KE5YGA, N5DRG, WB0QQT
 01-26-2016 QNI (4) NCS KA5TJS, KE5YUM, KE5YGA, N5DRG

NAQCC Midwest QRS Net (MWN) Scotty Long NU0S, Nebraska**40M, 7.117 MHz**

01-05-2016 QNI (3) NCS NU0S, W6FCS, KB7KY
 01-12-2016 QNI (6) NCS NU0S, KG0LD, KE0FEU, KB7KY, WB0QQT, K0KUZ
 01-19-2016 QNI (3) NCS NU0S, KB7KY, WW0W
 01-26-2016 QNI (1) NCS WB0QQT, thank you Steve for taking the net I needed a night off with the kids.

NAQCC Rocky Mountain Regional/Continental QRS Net (RMRc) Dale Putnam WC7S, Wyoming**20M, 14.062.5 MHz and 40M, 7.062.5 MHz (BOTH FREQ SHOWN ON ONE LINE)**

01-05-2016 QNI (5) NCS WC7S, K4QQ, KA5T, K0EVZ, KK5IB
 01-07-2016 QNI (6) NCS WC7S, VE7CFG, K5MP, K0EVZ, KE0CU, KF7WNS
 01-12-2016 QNI (6) NCS WC7S, AA7CU (20 and 40), N6IET, N7GES, KU7Y
 01-14-2016 QNI (4) NCS WC7S, AA7CU (20 and 40), KK5IB
 01-19-2016 QNI (4) NCS WC7S, AA7CU, KA5QQA, N7GES
 01-19-2016 QNI (4) NCS WC7S, AA7CU (20 and 40), K0EVZ
 01-27-2016 QNI (3) NCS WC7S, AA7CU, N7GES
 01-28-2016 QNI (5) NCS WC7S, AA7CU (20 and 40) N6ZI, K0EVZ

NAQCC West Virginia NET (WVN) John Smithson N8ZYA, West Virginia**40M, 7.117 MHz**

01-28-2016 QNI (2) NCS N8ZYA, W8GDP

NAQCC Pacific North West QRS 80 Meter Net (PNW80) Stewart Fletcher KE7LKW, Washington State**80M, 3.574 MHz**

01-01-2016 QNI (4) NCS KE7LKW, W7ANM, VE6ADM, VE6AWI

01-08-2016 QNI (5) NCS KE7LKW, W7ANM, WB4SPB, AD7BP, K7JUV

01-15-2016 QNI (5) NCS KE7LKW, WB4SPB, W7ANM, K7JUV, AD7BP

01-22-2016 QNI (6) NCS KE7LKW, WB4SPB, W7ANM, K7JUV, AD7BP, N7BYD

01-29-2016 QNI (7) NCS KE7LKW, WB4SPB, N6UG, AD7BP, W7ANM, K7JUV, N7OC

NAQCC Great Lakes Net (GLN) David Moss KE8DI, Michigan**80M, 3.534 MHz**

01-01-2016 QNI (0) No Net HNY01-08-2016 QNI (3) NCS WA8AXF, WB0QQT, K4AKC*01-15-2016 QNI (3) NCS KE8DI,

WE8UPJ, WB0QQT01-22-2016 QNI (1) NCS KE8DI01-29-2016 QNI (5) NCS KE8DI, WV8DHK*, WB0QQT, K0KUT*, KG0YR

*FIRST TIME CHECK-IN



HELP FOR BEGINNERS



Items in this section are from CW Assistance Project Coordinator Brion, VE3FUJ, unless otherwise credited. If you are interested in helping out or need some help yourself please contact VE3FUJ. Additional help is also available on our website at <http://www.naqcc.info/cw.html>.

Zero-Beat seems to be a hit and miss thing with a lot of stations. I have lately come across many QSO's where the stations were working anywhere up to about 400Hz apart. It just takes more room than necessary, and should not occur. With today's equipment and after market accessories there just is no excuse for being more than a few Hz apart. In a long QSO there's ample time and opportunity to correct the situation. Is it so hard to do or is it indifferent operating practice?

One of the times I noticed the practice was on a Saturday with an extremely busy band. These two stations were carrying on a rather long-winded rag-chew approximately 325Hz apart obviously unaware of the space they took up.

There are of course times when you come across a station that's just signing off and you want to catch him and just didn't have time to Zero-Beat. But your second transmission should be on or at least within a few Hz. If it isn't it doesn't reflect very well on the operators ability, and he should improve on the fact.

There is also the possibility that you establish a QSO and then try to Zero-Beat only to find the other station has moved up or down band and you are still the same distance in frequency apart as you were before. Then obviously the other station has a Zero-Beat problem and you best stay where you are lest you keep on moving with the same result. Those things do happen, as it did to me on several occasions. After trying to ZB twice I just gave in and remained where I was at. He never moved again either. Maybe he left his RIT on by mistake or maybe his rig is not aligned correctly. Of course it could be your own set that's off and then you need to look at it and fix it.

72 Brion



HAM QUIPS



Dick Sylvan, W9CBT, #2062, has been a QRP/CW operator for a long time. He is also a very talented cartoon artist. Dick's cartoons appear monthly in the *KY9A Telegraph*, a free ham radio eZine published by the Robert F. Heytow Memorial Radio Club (<http://www.k9ya.org/>). We are very pleased and honored to be allowed to reprint his cartoons here. Dick has also authored the book *HI HI - A Collection of Ham Radio Cartoons* available at <http://www.ky9a.org/w9cbt/>.

HAM LINGO "Mic Fright"



"Nothing to be frightened about when talking into the Microphone"



NAQCC CHAPTER NEWS

The North American QRP CW Club currently has seven local chapters - Europe, Western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, West Florida, Central Texas, Illowa, and Florida - but we would be more than happy to expand on that list. Chapters are more or less independent local gatherings organized by NAQCC members in a geographical area and subject to a list of guidelines from the NAQCC. They provide opportunities to have fun and to promote our parallel passions of QRP and CW. If you are interested in forming a local chapter please contact Club President Paul, N8XMS.

If your chapter is planning a portable operation activity and would like to have it promoted on the club email list or in the newsletter, send an email with the subject "NAQCC Portable Operation" and with the exact wording of the announcement to Vice President John, N8ZYA, at the email address listed on the last page about a week before the operation. Please be sure to include the UTC time for the event and not just the local time.

A report about your chapter activity should appear here. Please send them to KD2MX or N8XMS at the email addresses listed on the last page.

NAQCC chapters located in the United States are welcome to use the NAQCC Club call, N3AQC for their special operations. Please contact call sign trustee Paul, N8XMS, to schedule the use of N3AQC.

Chapter Reports Begin On The Next Page

CENTRAL TEXAS CHAPTER



Items in this section are from Central Texas Chapter President Danny, N5DRG, unless otherwise credited. Questions and comments should be directed to him.

The chapter is located in the Austin, TX area.

NAQCC CENTRAL TEXAS CHAPTER West Texas Field Trip

Greetings from Texas,

The Planned West Texas Field Trip was a big success, the chapter was able to work two SOTA summits, and take part in the ARRL National Parks On The Air event.

The drive west was a nice 6 plus hours, 450 mile drive from the Austin / San Antonio area to the Davis Mountains in Jeff Davis County. Max KD5SFK, and Steve KF5OYI drove out from the San Antonio "Seguin" area, while the rest of the crew left out from the north Austin area.

The Davis Mountains State Park was a very picturesque in every way, from the Park settled in between the Davis Mountains, to the wildlife in the Park, from the Mule Deer to the Javelina that gave Steve KF5OYI a run for his life when going to take out the trash on Saturday evening. This little Javelina was about a 60 pounder.



Max named it Hoover, as it was sucking up everything on the ground.

SUMMITS ON THE AIR

Mount Locke: W5T/ DE-003, Elevation 6791 Feet

The chapter made several contacts from Mt. Locke from the McDonald Observatory site, what a spectacular location to play... err work radio from.

The weather cool, crisp with clear blue skies, temperature hovering in the mid 40's, but there was a stiff

breeze blowing up to the peak.

Contacts made were from all over the US including a DX locations. Danny, N5DRG made a DX contact to the Czech Republic OK1FFU on 30 meters. Larry WB5BEK was on 20 meters knocking it out, while Steve, KF5OYI and Chuck KA5PVB operated phone and also made several contacts.

What a place to play much less work, some people really do have dream jobs.



Scenic view looking east from Mt. Locke



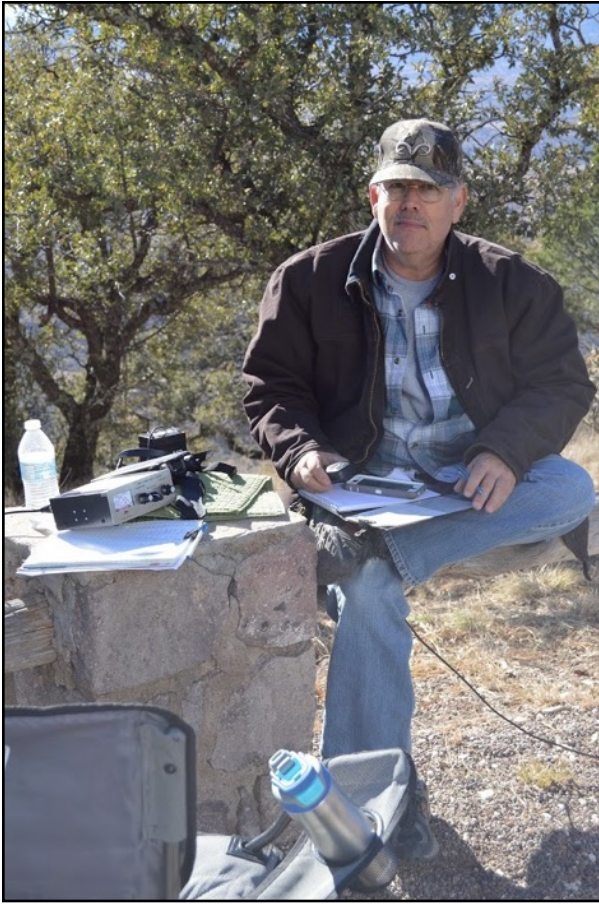
Larry WB5BEK working 20,30, &40 meters on Mt Locke using his Elecraft K1, Bencher Paddle



Larry's K1 and Bencher



Danny N5DRG working 30 meters, using his new Yaesu FT817, Bencher Paddle



Steve KF5OYI



Chuck KA5PVB Steve KF5OYI



Max KD5SFK Larry WB5BEK



Chris KD5GIK being camera shy!



*Danny N5DRG / NAQCC Central Texas Banner / Chuck KA5PVB
Highest Point in Texas for Highways*



McDonald Observatory 102 Inch Telescope Location

After a few hours on Mount Locke the chapter moved on over to Apache Mountain, after a short QRT back at the State Park for some well-deserved lunch. Sadly NO, Javelina, or Mule Deer was on the menu.

Apache Mountain W5T/DW-018, Elevation 6410 Feet

Around 2 pm the chapter headed out for Summit #2 for the day, Apache Mountain or Summit 6411 on the SOTA map.

Apache was more difficult to get to as it took four wheel drive to reach the point to where we could hike the rest of the way. Apache was a few hundred feet lower than Mt. Locke but it was still another fantastic view, as this one shows Mt. Locke in the background looking Northeast from Apache. The two small white dots are the telescope domes about 7 miles away.



Wide Open Spaces in Beautiful West Texas



Chris KD5GIK, Danny, N5DRG Looking over the 300 foot drop to the canyon floor, with Kitty, K5ITT telling him to please be careful...

Radio gear that was used for both SOTA locations were lightweight Jackite 31 foot telescoping poles and an end fed vertical 6 thru 40 meters using a 9:1 unun with a tuner, as shown on the Hawaii Emergency Amateur Radio Clubs web site. You can see the construction of the Unun from the URL below.

http://www.earchi.org/92011endfedfiles/Endfed6_40.pdf



*Some of the Foliage on top of Apache.
It all has Thorns!*

31 Foot Jackite with End Fed antenna, being held in small scrub brush tree. Yes I know it's hard to see a 16 gauge wire in the photo, but I assure you it's there.



Danny N5DRG & Steve KF5OYI working Apache



*KD5GIK, N5DRG, KD5SFK, KF5OYI, & WB5BEK On top of Apache
KA5PVB was camera man.*

NATIONAL PARKS ON THE AIR

NS19, Ft. Davis Historical Site Fort Davis, Texas

Historic Ft. Davis was unbelievable, what a perfect place to do anything, the Park Staff was most accommodating, they were the very best plain and simple, Hats off to John Heiner and his staff.

The chapter did not run CW or QRP all of this time at this location, as to give some of the group a better chance of operation in this picturesque location, I hope the NAQCC will forgive us. :^) We hope to have all parties fully CW operational on the next adventure into the wild.



*Left to Right
Chuck KA5PVB, Larry WB5BEK, Chris KD5GIK, Max KD5SFK, Steve KF5OYI & Danny N5DRG
On the Parade grounds of historic Fort Davis.*

The group worked over 200 contacts, and several DX contacts, including Australia, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Mexico, and Canada. The pile ups were, well huge, and amazing. Most of us have never been on the receiving end of such amateur radio activity. Worth every dime!

**We achieved our goal to promote Ham Radio, the NAQCC,
and World Domination of the HF Bands... Hi Hi.**

Thanks to all who helped us make this trip very worthwhile.

The great Staff at the Davis Mountains State Park.

Chuck KA5PVB for being the Chapters point of Contact / Host.

Terry K5TDA and his Better half Kitty, K5ITT for their part in being tour guides & allowing the Chapter on his little part of Texas, "Apache Mountain".

The University of Texas at McDonald Observatory.

The National Park Service at Fort Davis.
John Heiner, Park Superintendent

Mother Nature for Providing Clear Blue Skies, and Star Filled Unbelievable Night Skies

And all of the fellow tourist that walked by asking what we were doing and why.



Lastly the parting shot of the setting sun, as we leave the Beautiful Davis Mountains, and West Texas looking through the rear view mirror.



Yes this was the actual sunset Saturday the 30th headed back to camp. Thanks to Max KD5SFK.

Thanks for riding along.
7 3 from the Central Texas Chapter of the NAQCC

Keep Calm
&
QRP ON!

NAQCC EUROPEAN CHAPTER

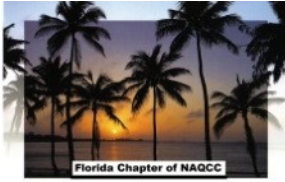


Items in this section are from European Chapter President Matt, MW0MIE, unless otherwise credited. Questions and comments should be directed to him. The European Chapter website is at <http://www.naqcc-eu.org/>.

The European Chapter has its own monthly challenges to compensate for the Atlantic Ocean. However all are welcome to participate, not just members in EU, and we regularly receive challenge logs from North American participants. Please see the chapter web pages for dates and details.

No report available.

NAQCC FLORIDA CHAPTER



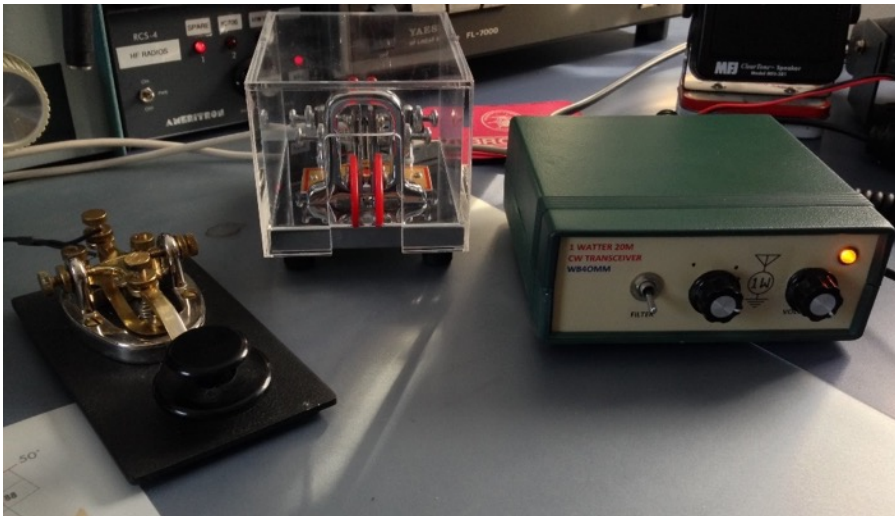
Items in this section are from the Florida Chapter unless otherwise credited. Questions or comments should go to Steve, WB4OMM. The Florida Chapter website is <http://wb40mm.com/naqcc-fl-chapter>.

NAQCC FLORIDA CHAPTER MEMBER NEWS:

Another Rain Cancellation! Kinda'!

Our January event - was kinda' not! Heavy rain and gusty winds made this start out as a "non-event". When I took a look outside around 6:45 am EST, the weather began to look ominous, just as the forecast predicted. At 6:49 am I got an e-mail from Wally, KG4LAL on the "other side of the County" (West side, I'm on the East side) saying it was already raining and he was cancelling out. After waiting 30 minutes, I sent Wally and the rest of the crew an e-mail, telling them since I had my car packed and lunch made, I was going to head over to the operation site 35 miles away anyhow, since it was just barely starting to rain. I figured if it was raining when I got there, I could just go grab breakfast and then come back home. Just as I sent it out, I got a message from Art WB4MNX, saying he and John KD4JS were cancelling out too. By 8am, it was pouring rain at the site (via the local WX RADAR) and at my house too!!! So what to do????

Egads, I got it!! A NAQCC QRPp "DogHouse-Pedition"



I would go out to the shack in my backyard (my "DogHouse") and operate from there. And I would use my newest toy, my "1Watter 20M". This radio is way cool, it puts out just shy of a watt (.90W to be precise) and works 20M from 14.053 to 14.061.

Diz, W8DIZ sells these board kits for \$46, and they are FB! (I have 27 states already with this little gem). I grabbed the umbrella and my coffee, and headed out to the wilds of Port Orange! And in the absolutely worse rain I have seen

in some time (we broke the record that day!), I made QRPp Qs! My first QSO was with Curt WB2JSG #3018 (NJ) (of course!!) Good O' Curt is ALWAYS there for us! Next was Chris KA9FCZ #11073 (IL), followed by Steve W4OEP #14288 (AZ), and Werner N8BB #5433 (MI). Curt and Werner gave me 599, a 439 from Chris, and a 219 that took a bit of doing with Steve - not bad for 1,793 miles! I had a blast!!! And got two new states (NJ, AZ) to boot! For more info on the radio - <http://kitsandparts.com/1watter20u2.php>

Many thanks to those who listened for us!

Our next foray in to the wilds of Florida:

Friday, February 19th, 2016 starting at 9:30 AM EST

Gemini Springs Park, DeBary, FL (37 Dirksen Drive, DeBary, FL 32713) – Park webpage with directions: [GEMINI SPRINGS PARK](#)

Art WB4MNK, Steve WB4OMM, Rick AA4W, Don K3RLL, Bob W2EJG, John KM4JTE & John KD4JS (plus whoever else can make it).

<http://wb4omm.com/naqcc-fl-chapter/>

Look for our announcement!

72/73 to all – Steve WB4OMM, #5913 - NAQCCFL@yahoo.com

NAQCC ILLOWA CHAPTER



Items in this section are from the Illowa Chapter unless otherwise credited. Questions or comments should go to Peter, NN9K.

The Illowa Chapter operates in the “Quad Cities” area of Davenport, IA / Moline, IL.

The Illowa chapter January meeting took place on the 20th with three members attending. It was decided that due to the cold and uncertain weather in February we would plan an indoor operating activity. After checking with a local club we are going to "borrow" their facilities and antennas for the event. There is adequate room to allow setting up several QRP stations as well as several high, wire antennas to choose from. We will notify the NAQCC membership several days before the event and will use the qrpspots.com website to post our calls and operating frequencies.

The next Illowa chapter meeting will be on 17 February.

Peter, NN9K

NAQCC WEST FLORIDA CHAPTER



Items in this section are from the West Florida Chapter unless otherwise credited. The chapter's web site is at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/967110089994401/>. Questions or comments should go to Ron, N9EE.

NAQCC-WFL Jan 23 QRP Event

Event was at Cypress Point Park in west Tampa, Florida. Attending: Ron, N9EE, from Spring Hill, Joel, WM4P from Palm Harbor, and visitor, Dave, W4MPH, from Tampa.

We arrived at 7:45AM. It was cold for Florida, 52 deg, with winds coming off the bay at I'd say 20mph, gusting to 30. So we set up in the parking lot and operated from our vehicles. I am sure others knowing the weather chose to wait until next time and I don't blame them, hi.

Ron's rig was FT817 w/MFJ manual tuner on battery to twin HamSticks as dipole up 8 ft. Joel had K1 to 20 ft long wire w/9:1 balun at 10ft/4ft. Both running 5W. We wanted to put up the 40m Windom that works well on 40, 20 & 10m, but the weather kinda talk us out of it.

Operated from 0915 to 1115 hrs.

LOG:

CALL	TIME	FREQ	MY/STN	NAME	QTH	COMMENT
KX9DX	0935	14.051	539/599	Rick	IL	
K5XS	1000	14.032	559/599	Bernie	AR	
WB2YRL	1005	14.032	449/599	Jeff	VA	FT2000, folded dipole
W1YL/4	1025	14.026	NA/599	Ellen	FL(?)	
WK2G	1030	14.025	569/599	Merrill	PA	

20m was good, but band was changing with QSB. Joel worked 40 & 15 m.

We had very good time although the weather was not what we wanted. Not sure if we are going to have Feb event since it's usually colder than Jan. But we are planning more. Will keep all informed.

Pictures of our operation are on the next two pages.



N9EE



W4MPH



WM4P



20m Hamstick Dipole



WM4P's 9-1 Balun



WM4P's Long Wire Antenna

NAQCC WEST VIRGINIA CHAPTER



Items in this section are from the West Virginia Chapter unless otherwise credited. The chapter's web site is at <https://plus.google.com/102627005227155262259?hl=en&partnerid=gplp0>. Questions or comments should go to John, N8ZYA.

The snow is the only news from West Virginia this month. Charleston is in a valley at an elevation of only 630 feet above sea level. A week and a half ago we measured 18 ½ inches on the ground. (The previous record was 17 inches.) It was common to see over two feet of snow in the higher elevations. Glengary West Virginia (on the eastern panhandle) had 42 inches of the stuff. It took me several days to dig the car out of the snow.



For me at least, this month has been two extreme climate events. I've experienced temperatures from near zero Fahrenheit to above 90 degrees Fahrenheit.

At the beginning of the month, my wife and I left for a trip to Central America. I handed my NAQCC duties to another club member for the weekly QRS net before leaving and hoped the monthly breakfast gathering would materialize without me.

I was having some health issues just before leaving for the trip but considered myself on the road to recovery. However, Murphy's Law caught up with me at around 30,000 feet somewhere between Charleston and Fort Lauderdale. I had a sharp pain in my left ear and completely lost my hearing.

Our first stop was in the Cayman Islands and then we sailed onward to Columbia. As we sailed past Cuba, I was surprised that it was such a large island. I was working the WV QRS net several months ago when **CO8RRM** checked in with me. My logbook must have 20 stations designated as Cuban.

I never stop thinking of radio and wondered if some of the stations I've worked were on the air.



I've made ten contacts with the Cayman Islands. The station **ZF2LC** is the most common. In Colombia my best bet would be **HK1MK** from February of last year.

I sailed through the [Panama Canal](#) in 1968; courtesy of the US Navy but I was unprepared for what I was about to see this year. I thought of **HP1/IZ6BRN** as we approached the locks. Sergio is an Italian engineer who I worked several years ago. He is part of the project to open a new section of the Canal. Target date is May for the new construction.





As you can see in the above photograph, it was hot everywhere in Central America. I look like I'm just about ready for a fork to be stuck in me and called for dinner.

As you can also see, I'm proud to be a CW operator and VP of the NAQCC Club. I wear my hat just about everywhere I go in the world. My hat is a good advertisement for us. I had a nice talk with one of the ships officers about QRP and Morse code.

I loved Costa Rica. My wife and I are both nature lovers and spending a day in the rain forest was an absolute delight. As we day hiked in the jungle, I thought of **T15W**. The rain forests in both Panama and Costa Rica are "alive"; the Birds, Iguanas, Sloths, and Monkeys in Central America are impressive. My only wish was that I be able to hear better with two ears.

Our last stop before heading back to Fort Lauderdale was the island of Jamaica. I worked **6Y5WJ** a few months ago while sitting at a picnic table in the Charleston area.

My wife climbed [Dunns River Falls](#) but I watched from the sidelines. I didn't want to get water in that left ear.



We had a safe journey back home but then again, that's when the snow started flying for that record snowfall.

My doctor said my loss of hearing in the left ear was the result of a bacterial infection. Two weeks of antibiotics has brought it back to life.

Happy Trails,

N8ZYA

NAQCC WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER



Items in this section are from the Western Pennsylvania Chapter unless otherwise credited. Questions or comments should go to John, K3WWP.

Not a lot of activity from the WPA Chapter in January. It sure will be nice when the weather improves and we can get out in the field to operate or go to some hamfests again. It hasn't been a bad winter - we've had very little of the ugly white stuff and temperatures haven't been all that cold. Still it wasn't warm enough to be conducive to outdoor activities.

Mike KC2EGL and I did get together a couple times. The first time was an impromptu visit on the 17th a day ahead of our planned get together on the 18th. The visit came about because Mike heard of a benefit dinner at a local fire company, and we visited there and enjoyed one of our favorite activities - eating.

When we got home, we played for a couple hours with the Lil' Squall transceivers we built some time ago. We never did get beyond a brief check back then with a real Rube Goldberg setup at that time. Today we did it up a little better as you can see in this picture below. With Mike's MFJ tuner and SWR meter we got the SWR down all the way to 1:1 and were putting out about two watts using my gel cell battery for power. One strange thing we need to figure out is why we have a strong 120 Hz hum on the audio. It doesn't seem to be on our transmitted signal. The frequency of our crystal was quite crowded so we didn't get a chance to make any QSOs.



Well, it still does look a bit like a Rube Goldberg hookup, doesn't it? HI.

Next it was our second bout of eating. We went to Wendy's, and when we got home, it was just about time to head to the shack for my streak QSO. It wasn't long till we found a strong YV5IUA on 30 meters. I asked Mike what my odds of getting him were. He said about one in seven. That was a bit pessimistic though, as I got him on the first call. Then a couple minutes later Mike also worked him.

After a couple snow squalls passed, Mike headed home. I suggested he stay the night, but he had to get some things at home for our planned visit the next day.

Mike returned at 10:00 the next morning. After the usual kibitzing for a while, we started on our planned activities, the first of which was the upgrading of Mike's two laptops to Windows 10. While that was starting, we went to King's Restaurant for breakfast. Very good food, but poor slow service. Mike and I had pretty much the same thing - pancakes, sausage/bacon, scrambled eggs, hash browns.

Back home again to continue with the Windows 10 upgrades. While that was going on, we walked, and walked, and wal..... That was our daily walking (inside - too cold outside) to kill time while the upgrading was going on. When the upgrades finished Mike checked his computers and found all went well.

Then after talking about some football records comparing the CFL and NFL, it was up to my shack to do some KX3/PX3 comparisons. I wanted to find out where a spurious spike was coming from on the 15 meters display on my PX3. Since it showed up with both my KX3 and Mike's attached, that narrowed it down to my PX3 since the spike did not show up on Mike's PX3. So I'll have to look into that.

We then went to Radio Shack to get a couple accessories for our Lil' Squall setups. I also got some wire to rewind my AM BCB DX loop while we were there.

At home again, Mike ordered a couple parts for his PX3 from Elecraft. Then we rewound my loop followed by a trip to Vocelli's for a large pizza with pepperoni, mushrooms, and tomatoes. Filled up now (for the time being), it was off to my shack for my DX streak QSO. It took a little while to find and work J79M on 40 meters. Mike tried to work him also, but he vanished, so Mike worked CO2IR instead.

Our next chapter activities will be a visit from Mike on President's Day and on February 28th, Mike, Tom WB3FAE, and I plan to visit our first hamfest of the year - the South Hills ARC one.



MEMBER SUBMISSIONS



This section is a forum for you to tell other members what you've been up to on the ham bands or to submit a short article dealing with some aspects of CW and QRP operation or equipment. Just about anything that would be of interest to our members would be welcomed. Send your items to our News Editor Paul, KD2MX.

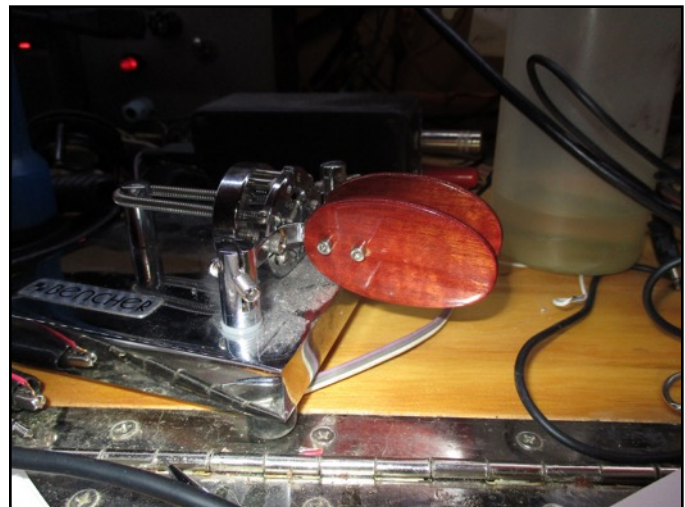
DISCLAIMER: Any views expressed in this section are those of the submitting member and may or may not be those of the NAQCC or its officers.

From Bill, WA2EDN, #5706 —

WA2EDN recently won one of our monthly sprint participation prizes and he sent this in - Editor

Received the gift today (with the snow !!). Here's before and after pics.
 Drill out old rivets with #35 drill and Dremel tool.
 Tap out holes for 4-40. (already were right size)
 Drill out new paddles with #33 drill and Dremel using old paddle as template.
 I had some 4-40 stainless socket head screws. And they work and look great.

Thanks Guys !!
 Bill



From Chuck, N8NK, #7519 —

Chuck sent a YouTube link to a great slide show presentation put together and narrated by the famous QRPer Rev. George Dobbs, G3RJV. The presentation was just published on January 4 and it is called "QRP - Why and How." It's well worth watching - Editor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bzSjoZoj11s>

From Howard, K4LXY, #7398 —

Here is my loop antenna project this weekend. I plan to replace the copper with RG-213 so that it will be more portable. I had a QSO with a fellow in WI on 20M, and one in Fayetteville, NC, on 40M, with about 3-4 watts, in this position. I'm pleased with it so far. I'm going to try it on the second floor next as it should work better on 40M there. Here is the basic idea I used: <http://www.g4ilo.com/wonder-loop.html>



From Ron, N9EE, #6145 —

I got this message via a QRP FaceBook page. The link and some of the info might be of interest to those wanting to learn the code. Sure not near as much fun as getting on a radio, but might help some that are restricted or just want to listen.

=====

In the midst of snowstorms and bitter cold, those of you who are CW ops may want to investigate a computer utility called CWCom. ***It lets you do CW over the internet.*** One cool aspect is that many of the ops are NOT hams. There are a number retired commercial ops and ex-military radio ops, so it keeps you on your toes.

I am using a wireless internet connection on the 2.4 GHz band. These overlap with Amateur frequencies. I also have used a gutted wireless mouse, also on the 2.4 GHz band, to connect my key to the computer. So the system is not devoid of wireless or amateur radio frequencies.

I'm not bad for an amateur using Morse code, but some of these guys are really outstanding. There also are plenty of slower ops and those willing to match your speed.

http://www.mrx.com.au/d_cwcom.htm

So here is your opportunity to practice some CW instead of languishing mid-winter. The bands don't seem that good much of time in any case.

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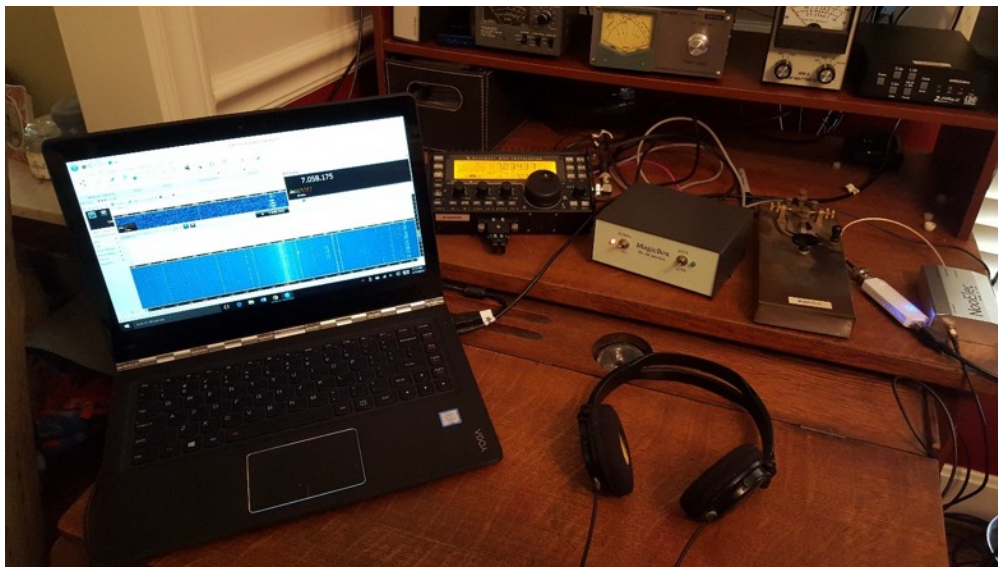
From Richard, K4KRW, #1815 —

I lucked out recently and picked up a 4SQRP-club used Magic Box. Unfortunately, the kit is no longer available. The Magic Box allows you to connect a QRP transmitter and a receiver so you can operate them together. It switches the antenna between the devices, mutes the receive audio and automatically provides a side tone as you operate. The kit was nicely assembled and was installed in a very nice case. I bought it with hopes of having a lot of fun with it in the future playing with homebrew or kit transmitters and receivers.

I wanted to check it out to make sure it worked. So on New Year's Eve I decided I would hook up a RTL-SDR (software defined receiver) dongle as my receiver and use one of my rigs for the transmitter. I've had the dongle for a while and had always thought it would be fun to actually use it for a QSO. Well, now I actually could.

Here are all of the components (Rube Goldberg would be proud):

1. Magic Box - Antenna, Headphones and Key hook to this.
2. KX3 - transmitter – Antenna and key line go to the Magic Box.
3. HF up-converter - Antenna lead goes to Magic Box. IF out goes to RTL-SDR.
4. RTL-SDR - IF from the up-converter goes to this. Dongle connects to PC.
5. Johnson Speed-X straight key (with handy desk stabilizer option – man that steel bar is heavy)
6. Headphones
7. PC (laptop). Headphone jack goes to Magic Box.



From Left to right – Laptop running SDR-Console, KX3, Magic Box, Key, SDR Dongle (white), Up-Converter (silver).

What a mess of wires. I used SDR-Console (V2) as the software to operate the receiver. The up-converter is required as the SDR dongle receives starting in the VHF range of frequencies. My up-converter places the HF bands in the range of 100 MHz. So, 7.040 will be at 107.040.

It is a little nerve wracking hooking your transmitter and receiver to a switch like this that someone else built. The last thing I wanted to do was send 5 watts straight to the receiver. But, after carefully checking things out it was clear the Magic Box was working correctly.

It is great how kits like this are often so well thought out. There is an option on the Magic Box to turn off

QSK. It keeps the receiver silenced for a short period after every transmission so you can't hear between dots, dashes and such. So, I'm thinking to myself, "why would I ever want to use this feature?" It turned out that I found out why on my very first CQ.

The SDR receiver needs time to process the signal received. The receiver does pick up signal from the transmitter and there is a significant amount of delay in what you hear. The delay completely throws you off when you are transmitting. You are hearing the elements you send after you send them. It was pretty painful. So, I opened the case and changed the jumper to disable QSK. Whew! That "useless feature" is now destined to become a front panel switch.

After sorting that out, I had a nice 30-minute QSO with a young ham (17) out of Stanley, NC. He had been a ham for only one year but you would never know it. He was sending at about 13 wpm with a straight key and his fist was very good. I told him about my configuration and he was familiar with the RTL-SDR and the up-converter. I think he got a real kick out of it all. What a fun afternoon. The RTL-SDR really did work quite well as a receiver. Now I need to order a fun QRP transmitter kit.

From Gregg, WB8LZG, #1444 —

For the past decade I've been fortunate to work at Michigan State University in the electrical engineering department. One of the perks of the job is that I start every morning before dawn in the W8SH radio shack surfing the airwaves for some rare signal from around the globe. It's a great way to ease into the day, and I often hear many other hams in the early hours doing exactly the same thing. One morning after a pleasant QSO with AG4T, Emilio in Miami, it occurred to me that this may indeed be a good measure of what's going on in the world.

With all of the terrible things happening out there, ham radio and hams themselves continue to endure and enhance the art of radio communication between all the people of the world. As hams we don't care about the race, religion, gender, or background of the person on the other end of the conversation. We only want to have a friendly discussion with them and foster good will amongst the ham community (If more of our ham operators were politicians we'd surely have a better world).

The path to these friendly QSO's isn't without it's built in pitfalls and hurdles. We have to deal with the "Kilowatt QRMers", the weekend "Contest Clatter", and the "Wicked QSB of the grayline", which almost sounds like an evil character in "The Wizard of OZ") Then there are times when Ol' Sol won't play nice at all ! Yet through it all we communicate and convey to each other our 73s and make lasting friendships around the globe.

As I sit in my easy chair I know I'm lucky to be able to come into the shack in the "wee hours", cruise up and down 40-meters and just listen. There's K1ESE, K5BIZ, W1PID, K6OLE, and AG4T.

When I hear all of my radio friends and regulars " on the air" every morning , I relax, sit back, spin the dial, take another sip of coffee, and think to myself, " All is right with the world."

From David, N4IVE, #7961 —

I'm sure all of the NAQCC members LOVE the monthly word challenges! I know I do. But figuring out what letters you need can be a challenge in itself. Why struggle! We all have computers, let them do the heavy lifting for you.

With that in mind I wrote a short program to do that hard work for me. All I need to do is look for people who have the letters I need and talk to them. I love to talk, don't you? ;)

This program is written in the Python scripting language. It has been tested on Linux and Windows and runs equally well on both of them and will certainly run on Macintosh too. This program will scan your ADI log file for QRP contacts (you do log your power level right?) and produce information to help you with the word searches. When you have all of the letters for a word it also outputs a properly formatted text block to submit to the challenge manager. You can download my script from <http://n4ive.com/software.html> - This is a command line application (everyone remembers the DOS prompt, this is where you run it)

Python is a cross platform scripting language. It runs on all the major operating systems which includes Windows, Macintosh and of course all flavors of Linux. There is TONS of support for this scripting language and it is very very popular with "Makers" of all types due to it's raw power, wide spread support, and the fact that it is cross platform. You can download Python for FREE from <http://www.python.org>.

From John, K3WWP, #0002 —

January was a dismal month for ham radio here. My local noise whatever it is pretty much ruins 80 meters and affects 40 meters, and the known furnace noise takes its toll of 17, 15, 12 for about one half to two thirds of the time depending on temperature. Plus propagation conditions in general as the sunspots decline are not conducive to making easy QSOs, especially to Europe. Then I'm always busy with something else when Europe is fairly good in the morning here. So because of all that, I failed to even come close to completing the European challenge this month. (Oh to live near the northern Atlantic coast and have more morning time to get on the air) Well I can't change where I live, but in February I might just try to change my daily schedule around so I can get on more in the mornings.

Most important of all though (to me) is continuing my DX streak, and I was able to still work some DX every day in January despite the above adversity. It now stands at 1,067 days. If I make all 29 days in February, that will extend it to a solid 3 years since I started on March 1, 2013. The DX did not include any of the several DXpeditions though. In fact, with the conditions and noise (especially), I didn't even hear any of the DXpedition stations, only the huge wide pileups, and you can't work them if you can't hear them.

I think the DX streak is becoming more satisfying as it gets more difficult though. Until a couple months or so ago, it was easy to just get on the bands in the evening and work some DX in a few minutes as conditions were better and my noise was lower. Now with the 'struggle', when I do get someone, the satisfaction is greater. I guess if that is true, I'm really in for a lot of satisfaction as sunspots decline even further. HI

Another thing I did accomplish was completing our "USA" January challenge when I worked N9ZXL on the 31st for the 2 Zs.

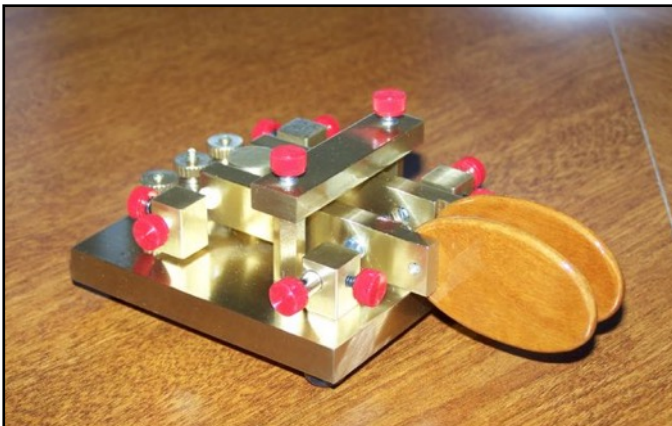
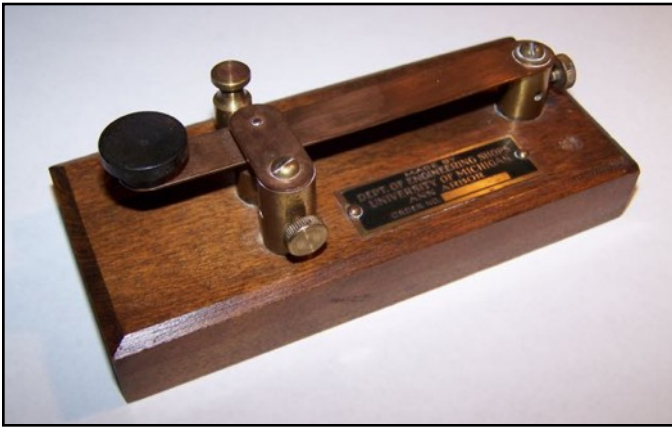
The adversity also extended to our NAQCC sprints. I was shut out in the 160M sprint, and only was able to dig out two QSOs from the noise in the regular sprint.

You know, I wonder how much worse it would be without the KX3. Its fabulous rx circuitry helps a lot with my noise, but even it can do so much with noise that is at 5-10 DB over S9 at times.

Enough said. The newsletters are getting longer and longer so I'll end here. If you are interested in more of my activities for whatever reason, there is always my web site diary at k3wwp.com and the WPA Chapter News section above here in the newsletter.

From Paul, N8XMS, #0675 —

In keeping with the spirit of the ARRL's Straight Key Night, which I didn't actually operate in this year, I decided to use a vintage key for every QSO this month. I made a few contacts using the antique strap key that I wrote about in the newsletter a year ago (http://www.naqcc.info/newsletter_199.pdf) and one with my 1941 Signal Corps "Flameproof" J5A. But most of my contacts, including my sprint QSOs this month, were made with the 1967 Vibroplex Original bug that I won as an NAQCC prize back in 2010. I'm not really a bug user and the last time that I had it on the air was more than 2 years ago so my bug fist was a little bit rusty to put it mildly! In all I had 61 QSOs with the bug and there are 61 operators out there that deserve some sympathy for having to copy my fist! It was a really fun challenge but I will probably be back on my Black Widow paddle and/or LTA SKCC straight key (both with add ons by WB8LZG) for the rest of the year.



From Jerry, VE6CPP, #5697 —

Jerry sent this link to an interesting article about the history and evolution of the telegraph key. Be sure to look at the top and bottom of the article for links to additional related topics. There is so much interesting stuff there that I have bookmarked the site for future reading. - Editor

<http://www.electronics-radio.com/articles/history/morse-code-telegraph/morse-key-development.php>



NAQCC CLUB INFORMATION

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

By Founding President Tom Mitchell, WY3H

We realize that QRP and CW operation do not appeal to everyone. We have no "axe to grind" with the QRO (high power) fraternity. We recognize that there are times when QRO operation is invaluable. During disasters such as floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes or terrorist attacks, radio amateurs provide vital, life-saving communications for which QRO operation is often necessary. QRO operators also provide an invaluable public service in health and welfare traffic and routine traffic handling.

Amateur radio has something for everyone, including SSB, other forms of digital communication and AM and FM operation. However, for a small but dedicated group, QRP (and QRPp) CW operation provides the greatest challenge and thrill amateur radio has to offer.

Each month the club will host a different challenge such as the GAW (Get Acquainted Week) or the Turkey challenge (making words relating to Thanksgiving from letters in call signs of stations worked). Also we will have a 2 hour sprint each month alternating between Tuesday and Wednesday evenings with a bonus multiplier for using a straight key.

In addition to QRP CW operation, the club encourages (but does not limit operators to) the use of simple wire antennas. The club offers free membership to any licensed radio amateur (or shortwave listener) anywhere in the world who is willing to use and promote QRP (or QRPp) CW for at least part of their operating time.

We don't have all the answers, but we are willing to answer questions concerning QRP and CW operation from newcomers to the hobby and veteran amateurs alike. Let's put the thrill back into amateur radio and work together to encourage everyone to just give it a try.

We welcome all who share our view to join us and become part of an elite amateur radio fraternity.

The North American QRP CW Club was founded in 2004 by WY3H and K3WWP and now has almost 8000 members throughout the world. Membership is free and anyone interested in CW/QRP operating is welcome. Complete information about the NAQCC, including a membership application, activities schedule, and useful resources, can be found on our website at <http://www.naqcc.info/>. Inquires can also be sent to

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Additional contact information can be found on the next page.

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