

LONG ISLAND CW CLUB



Teachers of Morse Code

longislandcwclub.org

Summer - 2023



KEY OF THE MONTH

Its a RA1AOM hand made Key!

submitted by Michael VA7MN



Field Day Pictures !





Hi Everyone.. !

This was my Field Day 2023 setup out in The Bush. I was running a PRC-174 20 watt manpack mounted on an ALICE backpack frame using the J-45 Knee Key. Inverted L wire antenna in the trees. I was also running radio teletype with the notebook computer and a Signalink interface.

Worked lots of CW and a few SSB stations on 40 meters. Fun!

73, Tim N6CC





Here are a couple of photos from Culpeper Amateur Radio Association's (CARA) 2023 Field Day. There is a photo of the club's CW tent and another of the two operators. They are Mike Toia, K3MT, in the foreground, and myself, Rick Manzer, NM4J. We used a go box with Vibroplex iambic paddles, a Yaesu FTDX-10 and an EFHW. We submitted 354 points to our Field Day package coordinator.

73 Rick Manzer
NM4J





BURLINGTON ARC field day – Ontario, Canada

From left to right; Jeff-VA3OBJ, Leo-VE3ZLG, Mike-VA3MRB, Scott-VA3EKR, Jason-VA3DFG, Dave-VA3DGA, Chris-VE3SKH, Rob-VE3ROR, Derek-VA3AKB,

Behind the camera; Chris-VE3EAY Missing from photo; Mike-VA3QAC, Chris-VE3RWJ

The Club QSO's - CW Contacts 254

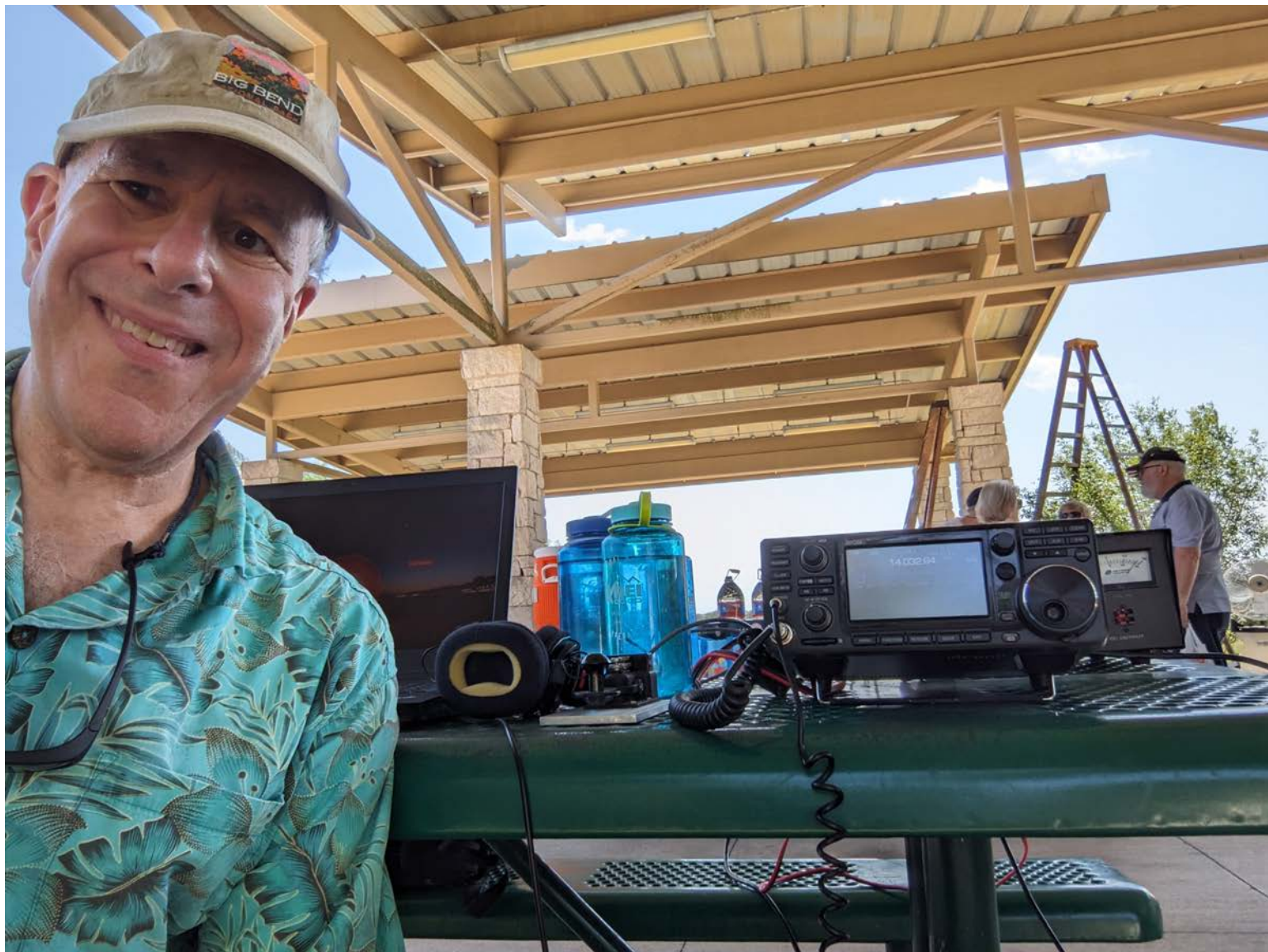
DIG Contacts 107

Phone Contacts 163

Cheers 73,

Rob-VE3ROR





This is myself in the photo. I was running my IC-7300 into a 40 – 10m EFHW on Saturday with a straight key.

The club is HamBuds in Texas and I was using the club call sign AF5M.

Sunday morning I was running my IC-705 5 watts QRP into the same antenna using the same key.

73, Marc WA6HBR



First Field Day and the weather was intermittent rain and thunderstorms.

Sitting under the awning at camp, I ran 1B with an IC705 (battery/5 watts) and an Alex Loop antenna. Worked both 20 and 40 meters -- had a blast and looking forward to 2024!

73's de

Kasey

KD2YMM





I became a ham by accident

Most of the hams that I know got involved with ham radio through an interest in short wave listening, electronics or CB radio or because they know someone that was a ham or worked with electronics. My path to ham radio took none of these paths. When I was young I was interested in science, mostly zoology and chemistry.

One day my mom came home and told me that her friend Bob WB2HUZ had just gotten his ham radio license and that I should “take a look at what that was about”. Since Bob lived only a few blocks away I took a walk over there to see what his ham radio stuff looked like. When I got there Bob assumed that I wanted him to help me get my license and he started teaching me Morse Code, I really didn’t intend to get my ham license but figured that I’d give it a try. I recall that he gave me a copy of the ARRL Radio Amateur’s License Manual and taught me that when sending CW (I only knew about a straight key) I needed to use my wrist and not my whole arm.



When I was ready to take the Novice test it was administered by Mike WB2CBU, Yaaay I passed!! My first call was WN2KWC and my rig was a used Heathkit DX-20 transmitter and AR-3 receiver. I couldn't get my code speed up to the required 13 words/minute for my General license so I got my Technician license when my Novice expired. When I got the Tech license my call became WB2KWC. As a Tech I became active on 6 meters with a Polycomm PC-6 (18 watts AM) and a 6 element beam atop a 10 foot tower on the roof of my parents' house. I became involved with the Flatbush Radio Club (W2RAK) and started operating Field Day with them. This is where I developed my fascination with CW.

The guys operating the CW station were the "real hams". They were using a keyer and copying CW at unbelievable speeds. I had never used a key more sophisticated than a bug and couldn't imagine myself ever copying code that fast.

In 1967 I finally worked my code speed up to 13 words/minute so I went to the FCC office in New York City and took the General exam. Once I had my General ticket I bought a National NCX-3 transceiver, put a 14AVQ vertical in the backyard and got on HF. A few years later I replaced the NCX-3 with a Drake T4-X and R4-A. A TA-33 Jr. replaced the 6 meter beam on the tower. I became involved with Air Force MARS and was assigned the MARS call AFC2KWC.

As an Electrical Engineering major in college I learned enough electronics to try for my Amateur Extra license so during Spring break in 1969 I once again made the trip to the FCC office in New York City and got my Amateur Extra ticket. I operated HF SSB, CW and RTTY (I had a real teletype machine obtained through Air Force MARS) until I got married in 1972.



When I got married we moved to an apartment so the only band that I operated was 2 meters with a mobile antenna attached to our air conditioner by a magnet. I still needed my dose of Field Day fun so I operated CW with a few different local clubs. We bought a house in 1976 and being a home owner, father and working left little time for ham radio other than 2 meter FM. I was not completely off HF; I operated the CW tent at Field Day each year with my club LIMARC.

By 2018 I was retired and had the urge to get back on HF so I bought an Icom IC-7300 and put a 20 meter dipole in my attic. I successfully used the IC-7300 on CW, FT8 and SSB and had fun writing software to control the radio. The dipole was replaced by a multi band End Fed Half Wave (still in the attic) in January 2021.

In 2020 I joined the Long Island CW club to improve my skills and be able to have CW ragchews instead of just operating in contests. LICW has improved my CW ability tremendously (I like to challenge myself to see how fast I can copy). I was the strange one among my friends; I had a weird obsession with Morse Code. With LICW I now have literally thousands of fellow members who share my passion. In addition to taking classes I have tried my hand at teaching in "Ken's Klass" (10-15 wpm), presenting at the QSO Today Virtual Ham Expo and moderating forums on the IC-7300 and the new LICW Challenge. Besides CW I also operate VHF FM and DMR on UHF and am the club secretary of LIMARC (the Long Island Mobile Amateur Radio Club). Recently some of my fellow LICW members have gotten me interested in Parks On The Air (POTA) and I hope to assemble the gear necessary to operate from Parks.

I hope to work you soon:

Ken WB2KWC LICW #921, SKCC #24882



My Favorite Quick / Easy / Cheap Antenna That Really Works

I have made several incarnations of the antenna I am about to describe here. All have worked exceptionally well. This is my go-to antenna when I don't have anything else available, or when I lack the parts and equipment needed to build a more elaborate antenna, or when I just want to get on the air quickly. This antenna is a non-resonant vertical doublet made from one contiguous length of window line.

With a good tuner, it should work well on all bands from 40 meters to 10 meters. With a really good tuner, you might eek out 75/80 meters, but I would not hold my breath (and if you did get it tuned up on 75/80 meters, I would not expect it to work all that well — its just too short). But I have used it on 17, 20, 30 and 40 meters with great success. The parts list for this antenna is blissfully short:

- 50' of Window Line (300 ohm, 450 ohm, doesn't matter)
- A pole to put it on.
- An antenna tuner, preferably with balanced outputs.

I currently have a 31' Jackite fiberglass pole which is so far the best pole I have ever used for one of these antennas. I attach the pole to something sturdy. In the past, I have sledge hammered fence posts (T-posts) into the ground and attached the pole to it with zip ties, I have zip tied it to a fence, I have driven water pipe into the ground and attached it to that.

For portable use, there are mounts that can be held in place by one's car. There are numerous possibilities. Use what you have. Just make sure it will withstand a good wind storm. With the Jackite, I have not bothered with guy wires. It's never needed it. But this is why you need to make sure that the base is well anchored.



I have used a number of antenna tuners with this antenna. They all have worked fine. I used an old MFJ-949B (and C and D) Versa Tuner II for years and worked the world with it and this antenna. Generally, antenna tuners have a 4:1 voltage balun in them for balanced lines. If that works, great. If not, or if your tuner does not have balanced output, then experiment with a 1:1 current balun and a short piece of coax to connect to the tuner you have. You can always make improvements later.

As far as construction of the actual antenna, take the window line, and separate the two wires for 15 feet from one end. Scissors, x-acto knives, box cutters, they all work fine to cut the material in between the wires. Leave the insulation on the wire themselves, just remove the stuff in between them. Leave the wires attached to the rest of the feed line. All you're doing here is separating the two wires which are going to form the two halves of the doublet.

Next, zip tie the wires along the length of the pole. Leave a little play in all but the top zip tie so that the wire can move as the pole flexes in the wind. When you are done you should have the doublet attached to the pole, one leg up and one leg down, and the feed line coming off the pole at about the mid point. Put the pole up and route the feed line to the operating position (avoiding metal, loops and sharp bends, best if the feed line comes off at a 90 degree angle from the pole, but that's not always practical so do the best you can) and connect to the antenna tuner.

Assuming you have your station otherwise set up, tune up using your tuner and go make some QSOs! If you have difficulty tuning on a certain band, alter the length of the feed line and try again. As described, you should have about 35 feet of it to play with. If your operating position is not 35 feet away from the antenna, it is OK to shorten or lengthen the feed line.



A word about feed line length: There are hams out there who have calculated charts showing what “good” and “bad” lengths of feed line are, and these charts provide a good starting point. It’s indeed helpful to heed their advice and try to steer clear of certain lengths.

I would certainly work with this when installing this antenna on a permanent basis. For a quick and possibly not long term deployment, I would not worry about it so much. In general it is advisable to have your feed line length be close to an odd quarter-wave multiple of the band you are using. In general, it is advisable to avoid half-wave lengths.

The trouble with this, in this instance, is two-fold:

1) The length of the antenna in these calculations is assumed to be resonant on the lowest band you want to work which is not necessarily the case with this antenna,

2) This is a multi-band antenna, so you would in practice have a hard time landing on a length that would be optimal across the spectrum you wish to work (it can be done it just gets complicated and takes time away from actually making contacts).

So I find that a few brief minutes of trial and error usually work just fine.

Remember, two of the features of this antenna is that it is “easy” and “quick.”

73 David Herring, N5DCH
Los Lunas, NM



Dedicated Hams

I just wanted to tell everyone how dedicated ham operators are to the ham community. We had 6 Boy Scouts from Troop 007 in Pueblo West, Colorado. Last year they tested and became Technicians. This year they just finished 8 weeks of classes for their General Class License. There were 6 boys testing and we had 8 VE's show up to help with the testing. I am proud to be a part of this organization in Pueblo West the Pueblo West Amateur Radio Club.

Orlando Maez K0NAO

=====

I posted this on the LICW Facebook page but thought it could make a great newsletter submission. It I really helping me learn CW. This is the center console of my Crown Vic Police Interceptor. Notice the CW code oscillator. Perfect for practicing letters and words when I am waiting at a stop light. I like to practice the letters from the license plate ahead of me. Before I leave my car I tap out a few billboards, signs or the name of the store I am about to enter, etc.

This is a fun way to practice CW.

73 de KE8E0N

LICW #4161



SOTAMAT W7HLO

If you have done any POTA or SOTA activations you know how important it is to get spotted. Both organizations provide a means by which you can “grease the skids” by setting up an alert on their website. This will cause their site to watch the RBN system during the time period you designate and if your CQ is picked up the website will spot you. While this process seems to work rather well there are a couple of issues with it. When you get on-site and go to start your activation you may find that the band or frequency that you specified in your alert the night before is no longer a good choice. Or perhaps you are running QRP and the RBN network is simply not hearing you. Most activators, in addition to setting up alerts ahead of time, will try and log into the SOTA/POTA website via their cell phone after they get set up and “Self Spot. But what if you are in an area that has limited or no cell service.

Brian Mathews / AB6D has come up with a really clever way that you can self spot with your cell phone even when there is no cell coverage. In addition, his scheme will also allow you to trigger the sending of an SMS message or email if the need should arise. The ability to send a pre-programmed SMS message when there is no cell coverage is an added bonus. These functions are performed by use of an app that he has created for either the iOS or Android phones, coupled with your HF rig.

The way the process works is you go to his website and after registering, you set up a configuration that contains all of the parks and/or summits you are likely to want to activate, modes you might wish to use, and frequencies you are likely to be on, along with incremental adjustments in frequency. And if you desire, you can also predefine some SMS messages or emails with designated recipients. This “configuration” can be redefined any time you wish so if your activation plans change you can update it.



Once you have developed your configuration on his website, the site will reduce that configuration to what Brian calls a Blurb of Text. You simply copy that blurb, either email or text it to your phone, and paste it into the app. In so doing it “programs” your array of selections into the app. Then when you get on-site you use the app to select the park or summit, the frequency, etc. from your previously programmed choices. Then set your VFO to any FT8 frequency, hold your phone up to the mic and key the mic when the app says to do so. Your phone then sends out a specially coded set of FT8 tones which get picked up by PSKReporter. Those get scraped by his website which then takes action based on the content that was sent. The app sends out your call sign with a very short string of characters as a suffice. His website then takes this short message and uses it to parse through your configuration “blurb” and it figures out whether you are wanting to self spot or send a message, the appropriate parameters and performs the action you specified.

This is a very brief summary of what his system can do and how it functions. Brian is providing this capability free of charge so if you do any SOTA or POTA activations I suggest you go to his site and check it out. I found the site and the phone app to be very simple and easy to set up and to use. If you are using an iPhone make note Brian’s instructions for finding the app on the Apple store.

Brian’s site can be found at <https://sotamat.com>.

73 Dale / W7HLO



SOTAMĀT - UPDATE

W7HLO

If you have done any POTA or SOTA activations you know how important it is to get spotted. Both organizations provide a means by which you can “grease the skids” by setting up an alert on their website. This will cause their site to monitor various reporting systems during the time period you designate and if your CQ is picked up the website will spot you. While this process seems to work rather well there are a couple of issues with it. When you get on-site and go to start your activation you may find that the band or frequency that you specified in your alert the night before is no longer a good choice either due to band conditions or other stations. Or perhaps you are running QRP and the reporting network is simply not hearing you.

Most activators, in addition to setting up alerts ahead of time, will try and log into the SOTA/POTA website via their cell phone after they get set up and “Self Spot. But what if you are in an area that has limited or no cell service.

Brian Mathews / AB6D has come up with a really clever system that he calls SOTAMAT.

What SOTAMĀT does:

SOTAmāt (pronounced “sota mate”, like “automate”) automates a variety of SOTA and POTA activities, including:

1. One-way commands sent via HF radio (works without internet, cellular, or satellite):

- o Self-spotting (SOTA and POTA)
- o Self-alerting especially for CW operators
- o Select and send predefined messages to predefined recipients using SMS or email.

2. Two-way commands sent/received via SMS, eMail, or Garmin inReach:

- o Find Summit-to-Summit (SOTA S2S) or Park-to-Park (POTA P2P) opportunities with recent spots reports
- o Post a spot (SOTA and POTA)
- o Post an alert especially for CW operators wishing to ‘tickle’ RBNhole (SOTA)
- o Get an upcoming alerts report (SOTA)
- o Get information on Peaks, Parks, and Callsigns (SOTA and POTA)
- o Get Weather forecasts specific to SOTA peaks and POTA parks
- o ...and more...



How SOTAMĀT works:

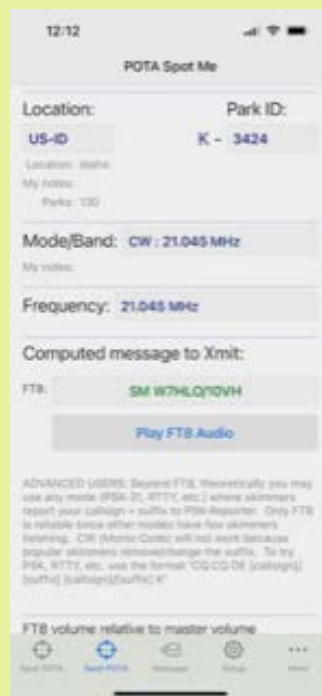
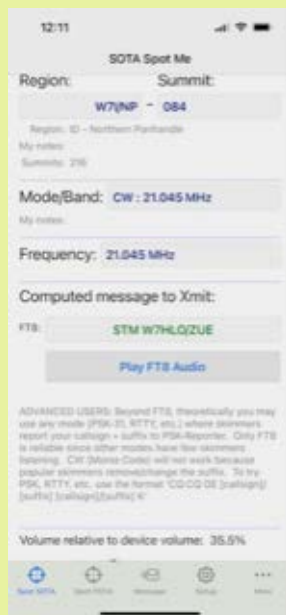
The way the SOTAMĀT system works is the SOTAMĀT server listens to PSKReporter for your callsign followed by a special suffix. This call sign and suffix combination is created by an app that Brian has created that you run on your phone or tablet (iOS or Android). The suffix is unique to you and how you have configured the app. The app sends an FT8 message with this call sign and suffix combination which is then scraped from PSKReporter by the SOTAMĀT server. Brian's server decodes the suffix and then executes the command you have requested.

How to get started with SOTAMĀT:

The first step to getting started is to go to the Sotamat website (<https://sotamat.com>), and after registering, you set up a configuration that contains all of the parks and/or summits you are likely to want to activate, modes you might wish to use, and frequencies you are likely to be on, along with incremental adjustments in frequency. And if you desire, you can also predefine some SMS messages or emails with designated recipients. This "configuration" can be redefined any time you wish so if your activation plans change you can update it.

Once you have developed your configuration on his website, the site will reduce that configuration to what Brian calls a Blurb of Text and store that information in your account. You simply copy that blurb, either email or text it to your phone, and paste it into the app. In so doing it "programs" your array of selections into the app.

When you get on-site you use the app to select the park or summit, the frequency, etc. from your previously programmed choices and select which action you would like the system to perform. If, for example you wanted to spot yourself either on SOTA or POTA, after you have made your site and frequency designations, the screen on your phone would look something like this:



Playing Chess via CW – Richard Spohn WB2GXM

When I obtained my novice ticket in the early 70s, the game of Chess was all the rage. The legendary matches between Bobby Fischer and Boris Spassky were making front-page headlines almost daily. It seemed only natural to combine Chess with amateur radio.

I had no trouble finding like-minded hams and was soon playing games via CW on a regular basis. I spent one entire Summer enjoying an ongoing series of games with a Maryland amateur, and we stayed up till all-hours happily sending moves to each other.

The game of Chess lends itself readily to being played on the air; its notation is straightforward. Quoting Wikipedia, “Algebraic notation (or AN) is the standard method for recording and describing the moves in a game of chess. Also called standard notation, it is based on coordinate notation, a system of coordinates to uniquely identify each square on the chessboard.” Chess.com states further, “...algebraic notation shows you the move number, the name of the piece that is moved and then the square where the piece moves.

Each piece has an abbreviation, while every square on the chessboard has its own name.” The pieces are designated as follows: King = “K”, Knight = “N”, Queen = “Q”, Rook = “R”, Bishop = “B”. The lowly pawn has no identifier, but is simply referred to by the square on the board to which it is moved.

All figures are borrowed from Chess.com. Referring to Figure 1, you will note that each row has its own number and each column has its own letter. Thus, every square on the board can be identified by its own unique combination of letter and number.





Figure 1. Every square has its own identifier.



Figure 2. The first move is notated as "E4"

In Figure 2, white has made the first move, advancing the king's pawn 2 squares. The notation for this is "E4" – this is simply the id of the square that the white pawn moves to.

In Figure 3, black has countered with black's pawn, "E5", and white then moves white's knight, "NF3" – here we name the piece, the knight or N, since it is not a pawn.



Figure 3. The third move is notated as "NF3"

Finally, in Figure 4, when white moves white's bishop and captures another piece, the notation is "BXC6" – an x is placed between the letter id of the piece and the id of the square it moves to, to denote a capture.



Figure 4. White's Bishop captures a piece: "BXC6"

You can visit

<https://www.chess.com/terms/chess-notation>

for a thorough explanation of modern Chess notation.

There is no "official" form for the protocol in playing Chess on the air. In his excellent blog, "How to Play Chess on CW", Gary WA0ZSU outlines a structure designed to avoid errors in communicating moves while minimizing dead air between moves, adopted by members of the CARI (Chess and Amateur Radio International) Club. Gary states, "The CARI player's invention was using combinations of the letter "R" to distinguish the moves. To send a move, you send R R R, the move (twice), and another R. My first move

might be R R R E4 E4 R. If my opponent hears it correctly, he sends back R R, the move, and another R. So his confirmation of the move might be R R E4 R. Finally, if I agree with the move he returned to me, I send another R.” You can read Gary’s blog in full at <https://www.kb6nu.com/play-chess-cw/>

Following the CARI model, let’s say Station-1 is white and Station-2 is black. In the game presented above,

Station-1

makes the first move: R R R E4 E4 R

Station-2

replies with a double “R R” to acknowledge receipt of white’s move and, most importantly, repeats the first move back to Station-1: R R E4 R

Station-1

then sends a single “R”, to ensure that both opponents agree on the first move. Agreeing on every move is key – I didn’t do this back in the day, and lost many games because I copied my opponent’s move incorrectly and didn’t confirm it. Many unpleasant surprises followed! Continuing play,

Station-2

now sends the second move.

The three exchanges for the second move are:

[Station-2, black] R R R E5 E5 R

[Station-1, white] R R E5 R

[Station-2, black] R



And now the third move:

[Station-1, white] R R R NF3 NF3 R

[Station-2, black] R R NF3 R

[Station-1, white] R

...and so on. Gary states that “the player waiting for his opponent’s move can police the frequency by ID’ing frequently (for example, with ‘DE WA0ZSU ES AE1B CHESS GAME TKS’).

It usually keeps things quiet...Sending repeated ID’s also help(s) advertise radio chess. We met several players on the air that way.” It is essential, of course, to keep track of your game. Using a computer will allow you to keep track of as many simultaneous games as you care to play. You can also use a dry-erase board, or even magnets placed onto your refrigerator door over a printout of a chessboard.

There is something to be said, however, for the charm of going old-school and setting up an actual chessboard in your shack, making all the moves yourself as they are played, in order to better visualize your strategy.

If only Mr. Fischer had been persuaded to get his ham license! –

73 de Rich WB2GXM



Quick, Inexpensive Shack Update

It's always nice when one can make a small improvement to their operating position without breaking the bank. I have three radios in my shack, an Elecraft KX-2, an Icom 7610, and an Icom 7100. The KX-2 and 7100 are utilized as my field radios but when I'm not in the field I like have them operational in my shack. I'm at an age where if I don't use a rig periodically I tend to forget some of the nuances of its operation so by keeping all three rigs in the shack and ready to use, I can bounce back and forth and keep my skills honed up.

I also have three CW keys that I tend to cycle between. A Begalli Adventurer paddle, a CW Morse SP4 Paddle, and a straight key. As I switched between the three keys and the threeradios it seemed like I was constantly plugging and unplugging cables. Not only was this a bit of a hassle but I've had more than one of those little 3.5mm jacks fail so I prefer not to stress them any more than necessary.

So, I purchased a small, 6-way stereo audio splitter and plugged my three keys into it:



Amazon link

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0B28NS9F9/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_search_asin_title?ie=UTF8&th=1



I then ran three cables from the splitter to my three radios. The problem with this approach is that the Icom rigs put a DC bias voltage on the key line which the KX-2 doesn't like. So I picked up an inexpensive 1 to 3 switch, ran a cable from the splitter to the input of the switch and ran three cables from the outputs of the switch to the three radios.

Now I can simply push a button and have the array of CW keys attached to the radio of my choosing and isolated from the other two rigs. The little switch fits perfectly under the front of my 7610.



A note about:
like hum. this usually is not needed in most installations, but please read.

Audio can be tricky sometime, especially when multiple devices are connected in same system, it creates audio noise hum...

If for this reason, we recommend to connect a Ground Loop isolator on the way that has noise, to avoid or solve noise problems.
You can search "Ground loop isolator" to find one.



connect a Ground Loop Isolator to at least ONE audio source to avoid or solve noise problems

Eliminates or Reduces Possible Audio Noise Problems



LICW Outing Bethpage State Park 4-14-23

We had a good day on April 14, 2023 with beautiful 80F WX which started out at the Embassy Diner near to Bethpage State Park POTA K2014. A nice photo of Rich K2UPS, Peter AA2VG, Drew N2AKJ, Ed N2GSL, Ken WB2KWC, Owen KC2VXW, Alan NY2G and Howard WB2UZE enjoying good food and conversation.

We set up 6 stations well spread out as follows:

Rob W2ITT: KX2 5W and a linked dipole. Rob worked east of the Mississippi and Germany

John W2XS: KX2 5W with an Inverted Vee using twin lead feed. John worked up and down the east coast

Owen KD2VXW: QCX Mini on 20m with QRP Guys EFHW. Owen made a number of contacts in USA and then we hooked up the club HB-1B with 5W and worked a couple of stations in Europe

Ed N2GSL: SW-3B 5W and EFHW. The SW-3B is only \$188 and it has a tuneable encoder and is very cute and works great.

Rich K2UPS: KX3 into a 100w amp with Vertical jackite pole. We worked many stations in Europe and USA, the furthest being Slovenia

Peter AA2VJ: Set up a KD1JV 3 band transceiver he built at 5W into a Buddipole and worked many USA stations

We contacted a number of LICW members and gave out some POTA contacts too. Its a bit difficult to spot ourselves and coordinate the efforts of 6 stations spread apart so some LICW members were not able to find us, but we did the best possible and had a lot of fun. Now that the WX is warm, we will do these outings more frequently

Regards

Howard WB2UZE



Embassy Diner



Rob W2ITT



W2XS, NY2G, KC2PSA, N2AKJ

W2XV Inverted VEE



OWEN KD2VXW





AA2VG and WB2KWC >



K2UPS





N2GSL ^



SW-3B QRP set up



The Park Site



Expelled?

This is a story of how I fell from grace with a famous amateur radio operator, almost got expelled from Junior High School, and eventually redeemed myself in this famous person's eyes. All because of amateur radio, and more specifically, Morse code. But first a little background.

I was always interested in radio for as long as I can remember. Listening to shortwave on a 'tombstone' Zenith radio on late winter nights my father and I could sometimes pull in amateur radio conversations and always some foreign broadcast stations. For a Cub Scout project I made a crystal radio set and as a Boy Scout project a two tube, battery powered regenerative radio. I think I was 11 or so and my dad took me to the high school where I demonstrated it to Marshall Ensor, shop teacher and a ham radio operator (W0BSP-SK). When I was in the 7th grade, I began going to Mr. Ensor's office on my lunch break and he let me use a code practice machine and oscillator to learn to read and send Morse code. Like many kids, I wasn't aware of his achievements, just that he was our high school shop teacher and a local ham radio operator.

Shortly after I turned 13, Mr. Ensor administered my Novice exam, and I became the proud holder of a Novice license (KN0GER) in 1956. About that time 6-meters was booming on AM (solar cycle 19) and I wanted in on the action so bad I could taste it. I asked Mr. Ensor to administer the Technician class exam and he refused to do it. I remember him saying something like: 'That class of license is for people without any drive and discipline to learn CW! You need to get on the air, make contacts and get your General license! You don't need to be fooling around with 6-meters!'



Not to be deterred, I found another ham, Harry Krout (W0YQG-SK), a former student of Mr. Ensor's and he administered the Technician exam. I found out in short order Mr. Ensor was extremely disappointed in me and he didn't mince any words. Neither with me nor with Harry. Many years later Harry and I would reminisce and laugh about how Mr. Ensor had stopped him on the street one day and gave him holy heck for letting me ruin my amateur radio career. For someone who had grown to admire and respect both men, I felt like I had really let them down. I diligently practiced the code by listening to ARRL code practice sessions for a few weeks and soon felt I could easily copy 13 wpm. At that time, I was in Junior High and the FCC office in Kansas City some 35 miles away only administered the exam twice a week and not on weekends.

**an original pic of
Marshall and Loretta**



What to do?

Well, I did what any young boy would do if they wanted something bad enough! I skipped school and took the bus from my hometown to the FCC office. I easily passed and had a temporary General license in my hand when I walked out the door to catch the bus back home. The next day the Principal, Mr. Anderson, called me to his office and asked me why I had missed school. Gulp! I fessed up and told him what I had done. He then proceeded to inform me the school board was cracking down on unauthorized absences and they were recommending 1-day expulsions for the first offense. I really liked Mr. Anderson, he had been a pilot in WW II and was in every respect a gentleman.

All I could do was stand there and hang my head. Mr. Anderson told me to come back to his office after school was out and he would tell me my fate. When I was in my last period of class, a class runner came and gave me a note. It read something like: 'Mr. Anderson doesn't need to see you.' Gulp again! Was he going to call my parents? I sweated bullets that night, but my parents didn't say anything, nor did they ever find out about this escapade until many years later. The next morning in school I got a note from another class runner to see Mr. Ensor on my lunch break. He welcomed me as if I was the prodigal son, asked to see my temporary General license, gave me permission to operate his station in the shop office, and then asked me if I wanted to come out to his farm and see his kilowatt transmitter and meet his sister (Loretta W0UA – SK) who was also a ham. We had a wonderful chat, him asking me about the exam, discussing equipment, etc. It was as if I had joined an elite club and was now in the inner sanctum. As I left to return to my next class, Mr. Ensor said: 'I think I squared everything with Mr. Anderson, I told him that getting your General ticket was worth a lot more than missing a few hours of class.' Mystery solved, yet I never found out how Mr. Ensor had learned I was in a jam.

Marshall and his sister Loretta Ensor were pioneers in amateur radio. Marshall and Loretta conducted CW classes over the air for many years in the 1930s until the beginning of World War II. It's estimated they trained over 10,000 people to a sufficient level to earn their amateur radio licenses. I had the rare privilege of knowing both Marshall and Loretta. Marshall taught me CW and administered my Novice exam in 1956.

But more important, they both taught me what it means to devote your life to helping others as they did. Loretta always had a cookie or two on hand for me when I visited their farm. I miss them both and have many fond memories of their tutelage and friendship. For information of their achievements, check out the Marshall Ensor Memorial Organization (MEMO) website.

Harry and I became early members of MEMO and Harry, and his son Joe (KR0UT), devoted many hours restoring Marshall and Loretta's equipment. I participate in MEMO when and how I can and have made contacts with both W9BSP/W9UA special event operations where equipment of the 1930s is placed on the air. I have other stories about the Ensor Museum and the restoration and operation of the wonderful transmitter shown in this picture of Marshall and Loretta from the 30s. But I'll save those for a future LICW Newsletter edition.

73 Gary W5GW



Hey LICW, You Have \$\$\$ to burn?

Quickly, what is all of your ham stuff and computers worth? Depending on the insurance coverage for your home, it had better not be above \$1,500 to \$2,500! And that is after your deductible is paid. If it is, you could lose the money unless you act now.

For the next few moments we'll discuss the very important topic of how you insure your gear at home and away.

One quick disclaimer, while I was an insurance agent/broker for 27+ years, I am no longer. As a result, as you read this material and you want to take action or get more answers, call your insurance agent or one who is skilled in dealing with personal possessions such as yours. And, policies vary state by state, insurer by insurer, so examples used here represent general homeowner, apartment or condo coverage policies. Again, call your agent.

And a second note. This article is written in the U.S. Others may find their country may do a few things slightly different. But, since most every country uses the concept that you put lots of people's money in a pot to help members who run into adversity, no doubt this overview will help many LICW members outside the U.S.



So, talking about your keys, rigs, etc., we'll look at how many policies cover them. First, at home. In general, there is "limited coverage for furs, jewelry, silver, and other valuables". In "other valuables" you'll find all kinds of goodies, your collections, rigs and more. And that limited coverage seems to vary from \$1,500 to \$2,500. It may be more if you've purchased extra coverage. As an aside, those of us operating our shack in a basement, maybe an area that could have water running through or above ground, or in an area of high water that may reach our home (flood plain) likely have NO coverage for any damage to anything in the event of flood, water either surface or sewer, rain driven water, war, earthquake, act of civil riot and others. If flooding is a possibility flood insurance may be available, but also offers limitations.

Other things to remember. If you are a renter, the landlord covers the structure and not your belongings. So you'll want a renter's policy in any case. And, if you own a condo, the association covers the structure and adjoining walls as a rule. You need a condo owner's policy. In either case you will be faced with how to cover your special items.

There are other times you'll face coverage issues. Here are a few examples:

1. Mobile in a vehicle may or may not be covered. And if it is a covered item, it's after the deductible. And, as a rule must be "securely attached" to the vehicle and generally inspected by the insurance company before coverage is included.
2. Marine is similar.
3. Out in the great beyond at an epic DXpedition or P.O.T.A./S.O.T.A., not covered by your homeowners or auto coverage as a rule



Now we'll take a quick look at what you are able to do in order to avoid the financial loss of your rig, keys, computers, etc.. No one approach is recommended by me. It's up to you. First, there's the old "roll the bones" approach. Heck, I was going to buy new stuff anyway. \$0.00 coverage beyond your current coverages.

Next, you may hit Google to find one of the very few companies that specialize in insurance for hammr's. Or, you can talk to your current agent, which should be done in any case to ask about a special floater for your stuff.

Third, you could look at association coverage. One option is the ARRL policy. With one policy you're able to get coverage with a \$50 deductible, theft from unattended vehicle, towers and antennas to \$15,000. The premium as of this coverage is \$1.40 per \$100 covered value. See the ARRL site.

Whatever your choice, you will need a list of what's to be covered. To really make it easy on yourself and the agent take photos or video all of the items. As I was reminded by a good friend, take a picture of the back or bottom too where you'll find model and serial numbers. And, get everything. Even the handheld and collection things, along with CW keys. Keep the list, pictures and/or videos offsite. Should you choose to insure part or all of your risk, do double check on the coverage for your CW keys, new and old. Hopefully you found this information to be of interest. Moreover, while we all pray that misfortune doesn't visit, there are risks all around. The issue is whether you take all of financial risk, or pay someone else to share it with you.

Tom Langer KD9FPC #371



Hi folks.

Below you see myself along with Jim W6JIM and Bob WO6W at the International DX Convention here in my home QTH of Visalia, CA.

This was my first IDXC and I really enjoyed it. It started with Friday for DX University before lunch and Contest University after lunch. I learned a bunch of new things. New sites for DX Spotting, new ways to use the FT8 waterfall for DX'ing. There was a Q&A forum and lots of good info.

For contest university there was a lot of discussion on how to contest well. The focus was on Having Fun. To have fun we should read the rules, follow the exchange, not add anything extra and not use "Please Copy" anywhere. That was a running joke, but they were serious. We don't need to add "Please Copy" in contests.

I did a little exploration of the Exhibit hall and Displays. Yaesu, Elecraft and Flex were there on the radio side of things. It was cool to see and touch the Flex and Elecraft radios. I even ran the special event station N6V on phone a couple of times. The radio used was an Elecraft K4D with an external panadapter. It ran in to a hexbeam antenna up 55 feet on a tower. That was cool to see.

In the afternoon I met up with Jim W6JIM and Bob WO6W and we hung out together. It was nice to meet some other LICW members. We hung out at the DX Bar Hour for a little while and then had dinner at Marie Calendars. I haven't been there in a long time and it was good. I think I turned the guys on to Razzleberry Pie. :) My evil plan is working muahahaha LOL ;)



Next day started with ARRL introduction and introductions of DX operators who came to the convention. There was supposed to be a new product showcase but only one vendor showed up. The afternoon was more forums that were about 40 minutes each. I went to "Remote HF After The Pandemic" with Mark K6UFO and "Grounding and Bonding" with Tim K3LR. I'm glad I went to that class and learned a lot of how I need to ground and bond my equipment. If you can ever catch this talk from him I highly recommend it. I found out later that he's the president of DXEngineering. That was cool.



Then another cocktail hour while they set up the exhibit hall for dinner. Even though I preregistered they didn't assign me a table. That turned out to be fortunate. I was lucky enough to sit between Tim K3LR and Eric WA6HHQ who happened to be the co-owner of Elecraft. WOW what a way to have dinner at my first DX Convention. Eric was very nice and gracious and even decoded the QSO between 3Y0J and FT8WW when they had a QSO together.

At dinner 3 of the operators from the Bouvet dxpediton gave a talk on the experience. We all knew they were up against some tough conditions, but man this video, and presentation really showed how hard it was. Congrats Bouvey Ops!!! Then they gave the awards, and the night was over. No I didn't win the K4 they were raffling. Darn! :)

This morning was a breakfast buffet, a humorous ham presentation, some closing comments, and some final prizes.

Overall a very fun experience.

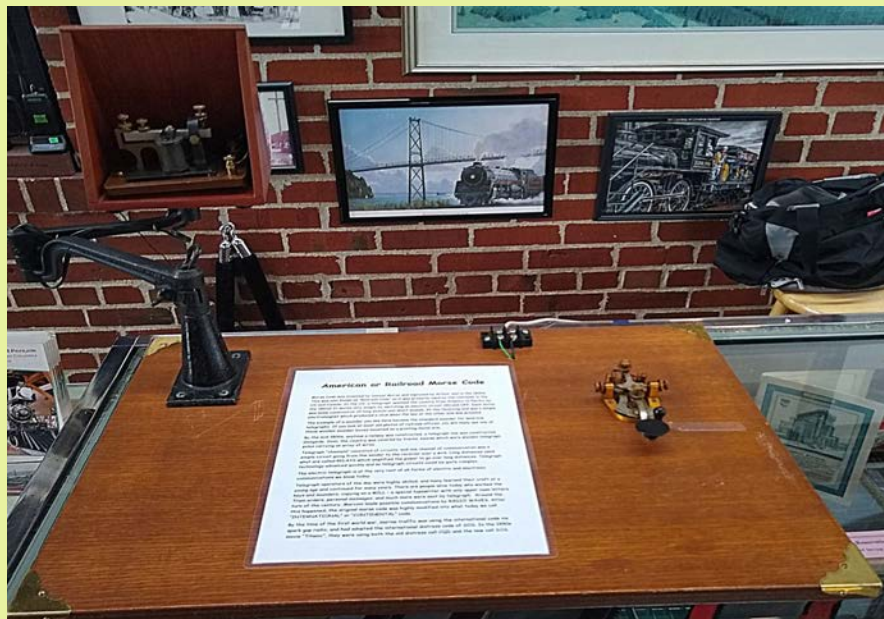
73 de KN6TZK Will





A few pics of the land line telegraph display at the Yaletown Roundhouse in British Columbia, Canada, where the old locomotive is on display. In the meantime, I am trying to learn railroad code, or American morse. The Vibroplex works pretty good on the sounder, but on the radio it's more difficult and has to re-adjusted. LOL

Cheers, 73 Michael VA7MN



Taught My Little Sister Morse Code

The Story of How I Taught My Little Sister Morse Code for Nefarious Purposes, Then Forgot It for 50 Years Only To Be Hauled Back in by (You Guessed It) My Little Sister!

When I was 14 and my sister was 12 I was studying Morse Code for a Boy Scout merit badge. Meanwhile, she and her friends needed a way to communicate in the middle of class without either the teacher or the boys in class knowing what was going on. No cheating, just chatting. She learned, she taught her classmate-friends, and they communicated freely through pencil-taps.

The teacher knew something was up, but couldn't quite put her finger on it (no pun intended). Now this was parochial school with nuns who were teachers! This story shows how they, too, had a sense of humor, because the teacher just let them have their fun. Meanwhile, all the boys remained clueless (sigh).

Flash forward 50 years to 20'21. My sister and her husband (world-class ham who bounced signals off the moon, etc.) have been reveling in amateur radio for forever. My sis approaches me and basically says,

"You need a social life. Be a ham."

After I tried a few jokes on her she said,

"No. Be another ham. And join LICW if you want to get good at it. And keep your day job!"

So here I am in LICW with my sis, learning code, the ways of proper sociability, and when not to tell jokes.

73 Stephen Norman (a.k.a. Yisroel Simcha)



KL0S Shack Note #10

Cure for a "Wandering" Vibroplex Key

I've been using the same Vibroplex single-action key since 1969 (~\$27 back then; now \$170) and never migrated to iambic keying, just couldn't get that "squeeze" movement! Even though the key is fairly heavy, it has always required me to hold it with my left hand to keep it from sliding around on the desk while keying with my right hand. Why have I waited so long to cure that? Beats me!

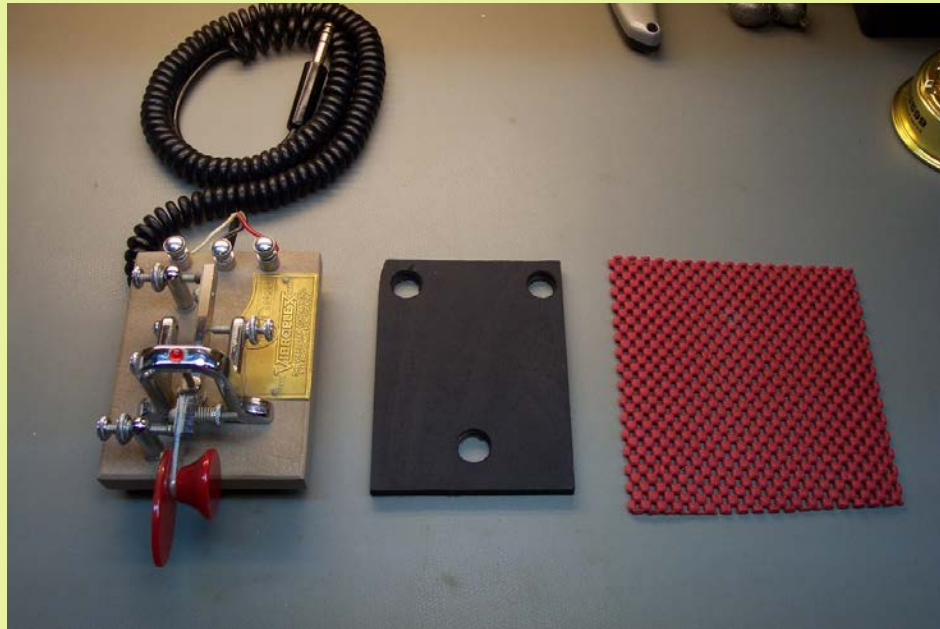


I recently saw a notice in one of the ham magazines (CQ?) that Vibroplex has designed a brand new key intended to cure this very slipping problem (<http://vibroplex.com>). This new model, named the "Vibrocube," weighs in at a hefty six pounds and for sure shouldn't move around on the desk – only problem is that it's only available as an iambic key. I sent a note to Scott Robbins, W4PA who recently bought the company, asking if they planned on a single-key action version. Scott told me that although there weren't any current plans that he would consider it for the future.

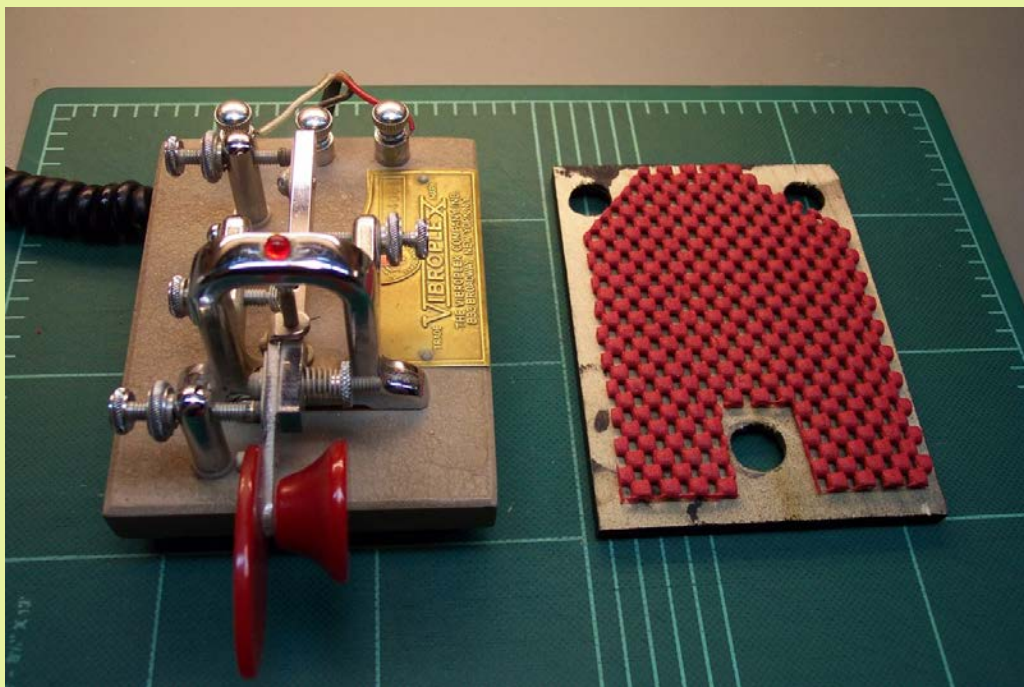
So I figured it was time to cure the problem myself and considered several approaches, one being to add some sort of lead weights to the key but I couldn't figure out how to add sufficient weight to the underside of the key without it looking really ugly. You know that frugality is the hallmark of a good ham so I thought about it some more and finally settled on a plan of action for a new project – I decided to create a thin wooden base with three holes where the key's rubber feet would sit in and then cover the bottom of the wooden base with a piece of the non-slip rubber material my XYL used to keep silverware organizers from sliding around in our kitchen drawers (you could also use the similar material used to keep area rugs from moving around on a hardwood floor).

Here's the key, base and non-slip rubber material I used:

I used some hobby style thin project plywood for the base and after cutting a small piece that matched the outline of the key base I determined where the key's three feet should settle and used a step-bit drill to create the holes. An unexpected benefit of using the step-bit was that it created a "countersunk" hole for the feet, with a larger diameter at the top of the hole than at the bottom which kept the feet from going all the way to the rubber material.



Once that was done I painted the top of the base and hot-glued the rubber non-slip material to the board's bottom and viola my brand new "key keeper in place thingamajig."



Actually it looks quite professional if I do say so myself! Of course you might say to yourself "...why not just put the key on top of a piece of that rubber material?" Yep, sure could but I like this approach better! ;-)



After putting it back on the radio desk I gave it a try and the key is now rock solid and I can actuate the key with my right hand without having to hold it with my left.

Amazing what you can do with a little bit of wood and glue huh? Something similar may work for your key if it "wanders" on your desk.



CU on CW soon!
73 – Dino KL0S (kl0s@cox.net)



Please Email your submissions to
ve3mkxqrp 'at' gmail.com

That's 'Dit' for this addition of the LICW Newsletter.

Please keep the submissions coming !

Thanks to all contributors, past and future !

See you on the Air, at one of the many LICW
classes or at one of many Hamfests !

73 Mike VE3MKX

Don't forget !!

.....to check out the LICW Web page, the event
calendar for up in coming classes and interesting
presentations !

We are also on Groups.IO and Facebook !

