



GET

**ON THE AIR**

## **THE LICW CULTURE GUIDE**

*The Story, Spirit, and Values We Carry Forward*



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## PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

LICW was not built from lesson plans, schedules, websites, or technology alone. It was built from the way people treated one another.

It grew because a beginner could enter a class feeling nervous and leave believing progress was possible. It grew because instructors corrected without humiliating, volunteers stepped forward when something needed to be done, and leaders remembered that there was a person behind every callsign.

Those habits may seem small, but together they became the culture of LICW.

Culture is difficult to preserve because much of it is never written down. It lives in the welcome given to a new member, the patience shown to a struggling student, the encouragement offered after a difficult class, and the phone call made when someone is facing hardship. It lives in the instinct to help first, listen carefully, and remember why the club exists.

This guide was written to carry those instincts forward.

The other LICW guides explain how students begin, what we teach, and why we teach it that way. This guide preserves something different: how LICW should feel. It describes the founder's voice, the member experience, the volunteer spirit, and the everyday choices that have made the club welcoming, practical, trusted, and recognizably LICW.

It is not a rulebook, a governance manual, or an attempt to freeze the club in time. LICW must continue to grow and change. New people, new tools, new classes, and new ideas will shape its future.

But growth should never cost us the qualities that made the club worth growing.

As decisions are made and responsibilities are passed from one person to another, this guide asks that one simple question remain at the center:

Will this help LICW remain a kind, practical, disciplined, welcoming, on-air-focused Morse code community where people are helped to succeed?



If it does, it belongs in the LICW story.

## **A NOTE TO THOSE WHO CARRY LICW FORWARD**

Every organization eventually reaches a moment when the people who built it must explain not only what they did, but what they meant. Schedules can be copied. Websites can be rebuilt. Lesson plans can be handed down. Culture is harder. Culture lives in tone, instinct, memory, and the small choices people make when no policy tells them exactly what to do.

This guide is an attempt to preserve those small choices. It is written for instructors, volunteers, leaders, and future caretakers of the Long Island CW Club. It is meant to answer a question that will matter more as LICW grows and changes: What should this place continue to feel like?

The answer is not complicated. LICW should feel welcoming. It should feel practical. It should feel serious about learning without taking itself too seriously. It should be a place where people can admit that Morse code is difficult, make mistakes in front of others, laugh, recover, and keep going. It should be a place where volunteers are appreciated, students are treated with dignity, and the ultimate goal remains clear: helping more people enjoy CW and use it on the air.

The details will change. The tools will change. The people will change. The club should still sound and feel like LICW.

The other LICW guides explain how to begin, what we teach, and why we teach it that way. This guide preserves something different. It preserves the voice in the room, the hand on a shoulder, the patient correction, the welcoming email, the call to a member who is struggling, and the confidence that someone can do more than they think they can.

### **1. HOW LICW BEGAN**

LICW began after Field Day in 2017 with a modest and practical goal.

Howard Bernstein WB2UZE and Rich K2UPS looked ahead to the following year's Field Day and came to a simple conclusion: their club needed more CW operators. They were not setting out to create a worldwide training



organization. They simply wanted to help a few more amateur radio operators learn Morse code well enough to take a place at the Field Day station.

That small idea arrived at exactly the right moment.

New technology was changing what a radio club could be. Zoom made it possible for people to meet face to face online, hear one another clearly, share screens, demonstrate equipment, and practice CW together without being in the same room. Geography no longer had to determine who could attend a class or who could teach one. A student on Long Island could learn alongside someone across the country - or eventually across the world.

The technology created the opportunity. A few years later, the COVID-19 pandemic created an extraordinary need.

When in-person meetings, club gatherings, and normal social activity suddenly stopped, amateur radio operators were looking for connection. LICW was already built around online classes and fellowship, so it was able to welcome people into a community that remained active when much of the world had become isolated. Members could learn, practice, laugh, struggle, and spend time with others from the safety of home.

What began as preparation for the next Field Day grew into something far larger than Howard and Rich had imagined.

Many amateur radio operators wanted to learn Morse code, but they could not find a place that was steady, welcoming, practical, and grounded in real operating. Some had tried before and failed. Some had passed a code test years earlier and lost the skill. Some were embarrassed by how slowly they progressed. Many simply needed someone to say, "Come in. You belong here. Let's work on it together."

Howard and Rich did not set out to build an institution. They wanted to generate more Morse code operators. That plain ambition became the club's compass. Classes, forums, schedules, technology, practice tools, partnerships, and public events all grew around it. They were never meant to become ends in themselves. They existed to help people learn, gain confidence, and get on the air.



The club grew because members found three things at the same time. They found structure: dependable classes, recognizable levels, and a place to return each week. They found encouragement: instructors who understood that fear and frustration are part of learning. And they found results: people who once believed they could not learn CW began making contacts, joining nets, operating portable, contesting, ragchewing, and eventually helping others.

Word spread because the experience felt different. Members recommended LICW not only because the teaching helped, but because the club treated them well. They were not made to feel foolish for being new, rusty, slow, nervous, or imperfect. They were invited to keep going.

LICW was created for the purpose of generating more Morse code operators among the amateur radio community.

That sentence is the beginning of the story and should remain near the center of every important decision. When LICW considers a new class, a new tool, a new partnership, or a new technology, the first question is not whether it is impressive. The question is whether it helps people become CW operators and enjoy the journey along the way.

## **2. WHAT WE WANT EVERY MEMBER TO FEEL**

A new member may enter an LICW Zoom room carrying much more than a key and headphones. They may carry years of frustration. They may have been told to “just practice more.” They may believe that everyone else hears code naturally while they alone struggle. They may be afraid to send because every uneven character feels like a public failure.

Our first cultural responsibility is to change that feeling.

A member should quickly sense that mistakes are normal here. They should understand where to begin, what to try next, and whom to ask for help. They should feel that the instructor is on their side. They should leave class challenged, but not diminished. Even when the work is hard, they should feel that progress remains possible.

This does not mean lowering standards. LICW has always believed that kindness and rigor belong together. Students should be asked to stretch, recover, and practice productively. They should also be protected from



humiliation, unnecessary comparison, and the idea that speed alone determines worth.

A healthy LICW experience gives members both comfort and stretch. There should be a place where they can succeed and a place where they can reach. Over time, the stretch becomes the comfort zone, and the next part of the path becomes visible.

No one should have to prove that they belong before they are allowed to learn.

Some members will move quickly. Others will take several rotations through the same material. Some will pause, leave, and return years later. That is not a failure of culture. Morse code development is rarely linear, and a welcoming club leaves the door open.

The LICW promise is simple. Members should find a clear next step, instructors who are patient and competent, training that points toward real operating, and a community where slower progress is not treated as failure.

### **3. HOW WE TREAT PEOPLE**

Culture is not the sentence written on a website. Culture is what happens when a student misses the same character for the fifth time. It is what happens when an instructor becomes frustrated, when two leaders disagree, when a volunteer needs to step away, or when a member asks a question everyone else seems to understand.

At LICW, kindness is not decorative. It is an operating requirement.

Kindness means correcting without humiliating. It means explaining without condescension. It means noticing effort, not merely accuracy. It means giving a nervous student time to find the unmute button, allowing a rusty operator to start again, and treating a miss as information rather than evidence of inadequacy.

Respect means that members are not talked down to, instructors are not undermined in front of students, and volunteers are not treated like paid staff. It means disagreement is handled directly and privately when possible. It means we assume good intent at the beginning, while still addressing behavior that harms the group.



LICW should remain free of the gatekeeping that has discouraged so many people in amateur radio. Experience should be shared generously, not used as a status marker. Advanced operators should remember what uncertainty felt like. Beginners should see that questions are welcome. Everyone should understand that skill earns responsibility, not superiority.

Official LICW spaces should remain focused on Morse code, learning, fellowship, and service. Members bring many beliefs and strong opinions into the club, but our common spaces should not become stages for politics, controversy, personal quarrels, or divisive subjects. We protect the atmosphere not because personality is unwelcome, but because the purpose of the space matters.

The club must remain a welcoming community that does not judge or criticize its members.

When tone begins to drift, leaders should act early and calmly. A gentle redirect is often enough. If it is not, expectations should be made clear. The goal is never public punishment. The goal is to protect the people who came to LICW expecting a safe place to learn and belong.

#### **4. HOW WE TEACH**

Instructors are the people through whom most students experience LICW. A member may never meet the club's leadership or read its guides, but they will remember how an instructor made them feel.

The strongest LICW instructor is not necessarily the fastest operator in the room. The strongest instructor can meet students where they are, explain clearly, listen carefully, and correct without discouraging. Skill matters. Temperament matters just as much.

An LICW class should feel calm, purposeful, and human. Instructors should be direct, but never sharp. They should be encouraging without pretending that everything is easy. They should make room for repetition, because repetition is where learning lives. They should laugh at their own mistakes and show students that even experienced operators miss, recover, and continue.



Classes should not become performance tests. Students should not be publicly ranked or compared. Speed numbers should not overshadow the actual developmental work: recognition, flow, recovery, word discovery, comprehension, sending rhythm, and confidence on the air.

The academic details belong in The LICW Curriculum Guide and The LICW Method Guide. The cultural message is simpler: we are preparing people for real communication. Real signals fade. Real operators have different fists. Real QSOs contain nerves, uncertainty, missed words, and recovery. We celebrate the student who stays in the stream, not only the student who produces perfect copy.

Missing is normal. Recovery is the skill.

Instructors should preserve their own personalities. LICW does not need a room full of identical teachers. Students benefit from different voices, examples, humor, and approaches. What must remain consistent is the underlying respect for the student, the alignment with the LICW Method, and the belief that the student can improve.

Future instructors often reveal themselves quietly. They help classmates, ask thoughtful questions, show up reliably, and encourage others without seeking attention. LICW leaders should notice those people. Some of the best teachers will not be the loudest or the fastest. They will be the people students trust.

## **5. THE PEOPLE WHO CARRY LICW**

LICW is an all-volunteer organization. Nearly everything members experience exists because someone chose to give time, skill, judgment, and emotional energy without expecting a paycheck.

Volunteers are not an inexhaustible resource. They have families, careers, health concerns, travel, and seasons of life when they can give more or less. A healthy club makes it easy for a person to step forward, easy to understand the work, and possible to step back without guilt.

Clear roles are a form of kindness. So are reasonable expectations, useful documentation, and a backup when life intervenes. Last-minute chaos may



sometimes be unavoidable, but it should never become the normal price of volunteering.

Appreciation should be specific. “Thank you” matters most when people know that their particular contribution was seen. A schedule maintained, a class covered, a student encouraged, a video edited, a website fixed, or a lesson plan improved may look small from the outside. Together, those acts are the club.

Leaders should pay attention when dependable volunteers become quiet, protective of information, irritable, or reluctant to take on one more task. Those signs may be personal, but they may also be telling us that the system is asking too much. Burnout should be treated as information, not a character flaw.

Volunteers should feel valued, not used.

LICW should continue to make room for bottom-up creativity. Many of the club’s best ideas began because a member saw a need and offered to help. Leaders should welcome that initiative, provide enough structure to support it, and resist the temptation to control every useful idea from the top.

At the same time, generosity needs continuity. No class, tool, system, or body of knowledge should depend entirely on one person. The best tribute to a volunteer’s work is to document it, share it, and make sure someone else can carry it when needed.

## **6. A MEMBER-DRIVEN, BOTTOM-UP CLUB**

One of Howard’s strongest desires is that LICW remain a member-driven, bottom-up club, not a top-down institution.

That does not mean LICW should be disorganized. It does not mean the club should lack leadership, standards, structure, or accountability. It means the energy of the club should continue to rise from the members, instructors, volunteers, program leads, and working groups closest to the work.

LICW grew because people saw needs and stepped forward. A student became an instructor. An instructor improved a lesson. A volunteer built a



tool. Someone created a practice tool, organized a forum, edited a newsletter, produced a podcast, maintained a website, supported a schedule, helped with recordings, welcomed kids, assisted members with disabilities, or found a better way to help students get on the air.

Many of LICW's best ideas did not begin as directives from the top. They began as observations from the field.

A member noticed something. An instructor tried something. A volunteer said, "I think I can help." Leadership listened, encouraged the idea, added enough structure to make it useful, and allowed good work to grow.

That instinct must be preserved.

As LICW transitions toward a nonprofit structure, the club may eventually have a Board of Directors with legal and fiduciary responsibility. That structure may be necessary to preserve the organization, protect its assets, satisfy nonprofit requirements, and ensure long-term stewardship. But a board should not become the source of every idea, every initiative, every operational decision, or every improvement.

A healthy future LICW board should protect the mission, preserve trust, maintain financial and legal responsibility, and support the people doing the work. It should not smother initiative by making capable volunteers wait for permission to solve obvious problems.

A board should govern. The people closest to the work should lead.

Program leads, level leads, operations leads, administrative leads, technology leads, communications leads, website and media leads, Kids Program leaders, instructors, and volunteers should be trusted to act within their areas of responsibility. They should be encouraged to make thoughtful improvements, raise concerns, propose experiments, and move useful ideas forward.

The culture should say clearly: if you see a need, speak up. If you have an idea, bring it forward. If you can help, offer. If you are responsible for an area, lead it. Do not wait for every answer to come from above.

This is especially important because LICW is too large, too active, and too human to be managed well by a small group issuing instructions from the top. The people who teach the classes often see student needs first. The



people who maintain the tools know where friction exists. The people who answer questions hear confusion before it becomes a larger problem. The people who welcome new members know where the first barriers appear.

Those voices should not be treated as complaints from below. They are the club's early warning system and its source of renewal.

Ideas should flow upward easily. Support should flow downward generously.

When a member, instructor, or volunteer brings forward a good idea, the first leadership response should not be, "Who authorized this?" It should be, "Does this help members, support the mission, protect the culture, and move people toward the air?"

If the answer is yes, LICW should look for a way to help.

Not every idea will be adopted. Not every experiment will work. Some ideas will need refinement, coordination, or limits. But the culture should reward thoughtful initiative, not punish it. A volunteer who tries something useful and imperfect should feel encouraged, not embarrassed. A lead who makes a reasonable decision in good faith should feel supported, not second-guessed into silence.

Bottom-up does not mean every person does whatever they want. It means people are trusted to lead within a shared culture. That shared culture - kindness, academic alignment, respect for students, protection of volunteers, good communication, transparency, and on-air purpose - is what keeps initiative from becoming chaos.

The best leaders in LICW should not feel threatened by initiative from others. They should look for it, encourage it, and help it mature. Leadership is not proven by controlling every decision. Leadership is proven by creating the conditions where good people can do good work without losing the spirit of the club.

Howard's founder instinct was not to build a rigid chain of command. It was to create a place where people who cared about CW could gather, learn, help, and contribute. That instinct allowed LICW to grow far beyond its original plan.

Future leaders should preserve that instinct.



LICW should remain a place where ideas rise from the membership, where leads are empowered to lead, where volunteers are trusted to improve what they touch, and where the board exists to protect and support the mission rather than dominate the daily life of the club.

A bottom-up LICW will remain alive, creative, generous, and resilient. A top-down LICW would eventually become smaller in spirit, even if it remained large in membership.

The inheritance Howard wants protected is simple: trust the people doing the work, listen to the members, empower the leads, encourage initiative, and let good ideas rise.

## **7. GOOD WILL, ACCESSIBILITY, AND SERVICE**

One of the clearest measures of LICW culture is how the club treats people who need more help than most.

Howard has often said that the club should be known for what it does for those who are not as fortunate as the majority of us. That conviction has shaped honorary memberships, personal outreach, accessibility work, support for members facing hardship, the haptic training device, and the continuing commitment to women and youth.

Good will is not abstract. Sometimes it is a phone call to a member facing illness or loss. Sometimes it is waiving a fee. Sometimes it is helping someone configure Zoom audio, adjusting a document for a screen reader, creating a different way to practice, or simply refusing to make a person feel burdensome for needing help.

The haptic training device, sometimes called the Good Vibrations unit, represents something larger than technology. It reflects the belief that Morse code should be made available to people with different abilities and learning needs. Accessibility should remain part of LICW's identity, not an optional accommodation added after everything else is designed.

The Kids Program should remain a special priority and, for as long as the club can responsibly sustain it, should remain available at no cost. The club callsign K2LCW connects that program to a real on-air identity and



reminds us that youth are not a side project. They are part of the future of CW.

Attracting and supporting women should also remain an intentional commitment. A welcoming culture does not assume that inclusion happens automatically. It listens, notices barriers, invites participation, and makes sure that people who have not always felt at home in amateur radio can see a place for themselves here.

These are not side projects. They are part of LICW's identity.

Honorary memberships should remain available when health, financial hardship, disability, public service, education, military service, clergy service, first-response work, or meaningful contribution to amateur radio makes that support appropriate. The details may evolve. The spirit should not.

## **8. MORE THAN CLASSES**

LICW became successful because it offered reliable instruction. It became a community because it offered reasons to remain after the lesson ended.

Forums, technical discussions, portable operating, hamfest tables, newsletters, podcasts, recorded presentations, operating nights, club callsigns, partnerships, and informal conversation all give members a way to belong beyond a single academic level. Those activities are not distractions from the mission. They help keep people connected to CW and to one another.

The social life of the club matters. A member who is temporarily stalled in the curriculum may remain active through a forum. An advanced operator may no longer need formal instruction but may find fellowship, service, or a new operating interest. A volunteer may discover a role that has nothing to do with teaching but becomes essential to the club.

Public-facing activity also matters. Many people first encounter LICW through a recommendation, a YouTube video, a podcast, a newsletter, a hamfest, a public class, or an online search. Every one of those encounters carries the club's reputation. Our public voice should be generous, useful, professional, and recognizably LICW.



Other CW organizations, educators, tool builders, and operating communities should be approached as potential partners rather than automatic competitors. LICW has grown stronger by finding common ground with people whose methods or traditions are not identical to ours. We should remain curious enough to learn and confident enough to cooperate.

LICW should be broad enough to remain a community, not merely a class schedule.

## **9. GETTING ON THE AIR**

The purpose of LICW comes alive when a member makes a contact.

For some, that first QSO comes quickly. For others, it may take months or years. The club should encourage on-air activity, remove fear, create pathways, and celebrate success. It should not make operating into a loyalty test or impose an artificial deadline.

Teach CW and direct members toward the air, but do not expect compliance.

That is an important cultural balance. LICW is not satisfied with endless classroom attendance as the final goal. We want members to discover the pleasure of real communication. But encouragement works best when it feels like an invitation rather than a demand.

Simple operating formats can make the first step less intimidating. POTA, SKCC, SOTA, slow-speed events, Field Day practice, guided QSOs, Buddy support, and mentor relationships can provide a bridge from Zoom to the radio. The particular pathways may change, but the club should always maintain visible, welcoming ways to move from learning into operating.

On the air, operators should carry the same culture they experience in class. Be patient with a shaky fist. Slow down when asked. Repeat without irritation. Welcome the new call. Remember that the person sending awkwardly today may become tomorrow's instructor, net control, activator, or friend.

LICW should also preserve the wisdom of experienced operators. Older operators learned under different conditions and often carry skills that are



difficult to describe: band awareness, adverse copy, rhythm, prediction, listening ahead, and the ability to adjust to different keys and fists. We should listen while those stories and instincts are still available.

It is not the key; it is the mind-hand connection.

The academic treatment of sending belongs elsewhere, but the cultural meaning is worth preserving. Good operators adapt. They listen. They develop rhythm and control. They remember that the equipment is a tool for human communication, not a substitute for it.

## **10. HOW WE SPEAK AND WORK TOGETHER**

As LICW grew, communication that once worked among a handful of friends became harder. More classes, platforms, volunteers, schedules, and projects created more chances for confusion. The answer is not to become cold or bureaucratic. The answer is to become clearer without losing warmth.

Official information should have an authoritative home. Schedules, guides, policies, access instructions, and important announcements should not exist in several competing versions. Other messages may point to the source, but they should not create a second truth.

Communication should be direct, kind, timely, and easy to act on. Members should not have to decode organizational language in order to know what to do. When a change affects people, explain the reason in plain language and tell them what, if anything, they need to do differently.

Disagreement is inevitable in a large volunteer organization. It is not evidence that culture has failed. The question is how disagreement is handled. LICW should address issues early, separate the concern from the person, move sensitive matters out of public channels, and avoid allowing persistent disruption to continue merely because correction feels uncomfortable.

When possible, begin with curiosity. “Help me understand what you are seeing” often opens a better conversation than an accusation. When a decision must be made, make it clearly. When a mistake is made,



acknowledge it. People can accept difficult outcomes more readily than they can accept evasiveness or disrespect.

Privacy and recordings are also matters of trust. Members should know when a session is being recorded, why information is collected, and who can access it. LICW should not normalize unauthorized transcription, unnecessary data collection, or hidden use of third-party tools. Technology should never outrun the trust of the people using it.

Clarity protects trust. Kindness protects people. LICW needs both.

## **11. CHANGE WITHOUT LOSING OURSELVES**

LICW must change. A club that refuses to evolve will eventually stop serving the people it was created to help.

New classes, partnerships, websites, portals, practice tools, communication systems, and leadership structures will continue to appear. Some will become permanent parts of LICW. Others will teach us something and then be set aside. Change is not the enemy of culture. Unexamined change is.

The best LICW changes begin with a real member problem. They are tested on a manageable scale. The people affected are included early. Expectations are explained. Feedback is invited. Results are reviewed honestly. If the idea does not serve members, it is revised or retired without embarrassment.

Technology should reduce friction. It should help members find classes, access resources, communicate, practice, and get on the air. Complexity is justified only when it creates a clear human benefit. Systems should not be built merely because they are possible or impressive.

LICW should also resist launching too many major initiatives at once. Volunteers need time to absorb change, and members need time to understand it. A few changes executed well will preserve more trust than a flood of good ideas delivered poorly.

Founder voice should not become an excuse to resist thoughtful improvement. Howard's instincts were curious and practical. The best way to honor them is not to freeze the club in time, but to test new ideas against



the same central concern: Will this help LICW remain welcoming, useful, and focused on creating CW operators?

Change should make LICW better without making it less LICW.

## **12. CARRYING LICW FORWARD**

Culture is most vulnerable during transition. A new leader can inherit passwords, documents, accounts, schedules, and legal authority without inheriting the instincts that made those things work. This guide exists because continuity requires more than access.

As LICW moves into a more formal nonprofit structure, continuity should not become control. The goal is to preserve legal stewardship while keeping day-to-day energy, creativity, and leadership close to the members, instructors, volunteers, and leads doing the work.

Future leaders should know where critical information lives, who maintains important systems, and how decisions have been made. Every essential role should have enough documentation and backup that one person can step away without placing the club at risk. No volunteer should feel trapped because only they know how something works.

But documentation and backup should never be used to flatten the spirit of volunteer leadership. The purpose of continuity is not to centralize every decision. The purpose is to make sure good work can continue, good people can step forward, and the club can remain steady when life changes, volunteers rotate, or leadership passes from one generation to the next.

Leadership at LICW should remain distributed enough to invite initiative and clear enough to avoid confusion. People need to know who is responsible, where to bring a concern, and how a decision will be made. Good leadership is not the concentration of every answer in one person or one board. It is the creation of a healthy system in which capable people can contribute, coordinate, decide, and carry responsibility together.

The Board of Directors, if created through the nonprofit transition, should understand its role as stewardship. It should protect the mission, preserve trust, safeguard the club's resources, and ensure legal and financial



responsibility. It should not replace the member-driven culture that made LICW successful. A board should govern. The people closest to the work should lead.

The program leads, level leads, operations leads, administrative leads, technology leads, communications leads, website and media leads, Kids Program leaders, instructors, and volunteers are not merely helpers waiting for direction. They are the living structure of LICW. They carry the curriculum, the schedule, the tools, the recordings, the forums, the public presence, the student experience, and the daily culture of the club.

Succession should therefore protect both authority and initiative. It should make clear who has responsibility without making every useful idea wait for permission. It should provide enough structure to prevent confusion, but not so much structure that volunteers stop feeling trusted. It should preserve the ability of good people to see a need, raise a hand, and help.

Financial stewardship is also part of culture. Dues should remain affordable when the membership model allows it. Reserves should be protected. Lifetime-member obligations and long-term commitments should be remembered. Spending should serve members, sustain the mission, support accessibility, strengthen tools, reduce avoidable risk, and preserve the club for those who will come after us.

The club callsigns W2LCW and K2LCW should be preserved as institutional assets and visible parts of LICW's identity. They connect the organization to the air, the place where its purpose is fulfilled. Their records, use, and continuity should never depend solely on personal memory.

Success should not be measured by attendance alone. Numbers matter, but so do stories: the first QSO, the returning operator, the student who finally stays in the stream, the volunteer who discovers a meaningful role, the person with a disability who gains access, the child who discovers CW, and the instructor who learns as much from teaching as the students do from class.

Succession is not merely replacing a person. It is preserving the trust, knowledge, tone, initiative, and shared responsibility that allow the club to continue.



LICW should move forward with enough structure to survive and enough freedom to remain alive.

### **13. WHAT MUST NEVER BE LOST**

LICW can change nearly everything about how it operates and still remain LICW. It can adopt new platforms, revise the curriculum, rename classes, add programs, form partnerships, and reorganize leadership. But some things are not merely details.

We must never lose the belief that people can learn Morse code when they are given structure, encouragement, and time. We must never lose the humility to meet a student where they are. We must never lose the patience to repeat, the kindness to correct without humiliation, or the practical insistence that learning should lead toward real communication.

We must never lose the volunteer spirit. LICW exists because people give something of themselves and find meaning in helping others. Those people should be thanked, supported, trusted, and allowed to have lives beyond the club.

We must never lose good will. The club should continue to notice members facing hardship, preserve accessibility, welcome women and youth, support the Kids Program, and make room for people who need a different path.

We must never become insular. LICW should remain visible, cooperative, curious, and willing to work with others who strengthen CW. Reputation is earned slowly through every class, message, video, forum, event, and recommendation. It should be treated as a precious cultural asset.

We must never confuse activity with purpose. A full calendar is not the mission. A sophisticated portal is not the mission. A large membership roll is not the mission. Those things matter only when they help people learn, belong, and get on the air.

Keep the club kind, practical, disciplined, welcoming, and on-air focused.

Most of all, we must never lose the confidence LICW gives people: the sense that Morse code is not reserved for a gifted few, that struggle is not failure, and that they may be capable of more than they thought.



## A CLOSING NOTE

LICW's strength has never rested in one leader, one curriculum choice, one practice tool, or one class format. Its strength comes from the way many things reinforce one another: sound academics, humane teaching, practical operating purpose, reliable systems, a generous public presence, founder voice, and volunteers who care deeply about helping others succeed.

The future should not preserve every detail exactly as it is today. Details will change. Tools will change. Platforms will change. Schedules will change. Leadership will change. The task is not to resist that future. The task is to carry forward the spirit that made LICW worth preserving.

When choices are difficult, return to the simplest questions. Will this help someone learn? Will it help someone feel welcome? Will it support a volunteer? Will it protect trust? Will it help more people enjoy CW and use it on the air?

If the answer is yes, move forward with confidence. If the answer is uncertain, slow down and listen. If the answer is no, have the courage to choose another path.

Make sure change continues to sound like LICW.

That is the inheritance. That is the responsibility. And that is the opportunity.