

K9YA Telegraph

Robert F. Heytow Memorial Radio Club

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Zeh Bouck

Pillar of Early Radio Journalism

Philip Cala-Lazar, K9PL

Browsing an on-line index of *Boys' Life* articles I noticed a number of them concerned radio: "The Radio Tower," October 1924, November 1924, December 1924, January 1925, February 1925; "A Great Two-Tube Receiver," March 1925;

"How to Build a Wavetrap," June 1925; "How to Build a Resistance Coupled Amplifier," August 1925; "How to Build a Radio Receiver for \$5.52," September 1925; and "How to Make a 'B' Battery Eliminator," October 1925.

You won't find the author of these articles without digging around a bit. It's a name missing from our collective memory of illustrious early Hams. Before researching this article I had never heard it spoken nor seen it printed anywhere. I was soon to discover he was a frequently published author of technical journals and books; contributor to pulp magazines and newspapers; an aviation radio pioneer; participant in the shaping of commercial broadcasting and Amateur Radio lawmaking; and a nationally known spokesman for the Amateur Radio Service.

His fellow Hams knew him as 2PI and the world knew him as Zeh "Jack" Bouck, but he was born J.W. Schmidt (he started using his pen name, Zeh Bouck, in high school) in New York on April 3, 1901 and died a scant 45 years later on August 28, 1946. His father, John A. Schmidt, was a German immigrant and merchant, and his mother, Alice White, a descendant of Governor William C. Bouck of New York (1843-1845).

1924—He Was 23-Years-Old

From the report of the *United States Department of Commerce, Recommendations for Regulation of Radio, Adopted by the Third National Radio Conference, Called by Herbert Hoover, Secretary of Commerce, October 6-10, 1924*, Chairman Hoover says:

AMATEURS

Nor have we overlooked in these previous conferences the voice or interest of the amateur, embracing as he does that

most beloved party in the United States—the American boy. He is represented at this conference, and we must have a peculiar affection for his rights and interests. I know nothing that has contributed more to sane joy and definite instruction than has radio. Through it the American boy to-day knows more about electricity and its usefulness than all of the grown-ups of the last generation. I have during the past year somewhat extended this wave band. I hope that this conference may dismiss the objections that have been raised to this action.

The luminaries of "Subcommittee No. 5: Amateur Problems" included H. P. Maxim, E. H. Armstrong and Zeh Bouck.

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*"...H.P. Maxim,
E.H. Armstrong
and Zeh Bouck."*

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When the Light Bulb Went On

Orrin Brand, K9KEJ



Who knew back in the 1950s that the quarters and other assorted change I would earn as a grocery delivery boy would amount to that tidy sum allowing me to learn about the world?

I was 11-years-old, happy to be “out in the world,” working at a neighborhood store after school, peddling a bicycle up and down Lawrence Avenue, with the large basket laden with groceries and fruit.

My mother insisted I save every nickel for the future. Of course I bridled at her instructions, but nevertheless, I dutifully obeyed.

I’ll never forget the time I carried a huge box of food up three flights of stairs to an apartment near Foster and Central Park Avenues. Going into the kitchen to deposit the order, I heard voices coming from another room. I asked a woman what it was all about. She answered her husband was, “In there, listening to his shortwave radio.” “May I take a look?” I asked. “Of course,” she replied.

Parked in front of a massive Grundig console radio, her husband was spinning the dial, stopping for a moment to listen to a Canadian broadcast station. He then moved the dial to another station, and I heard, “This is the voice of the Andes, HCJB, Quito, Ecuador.” I was astonished!

I left that apartment in a daze. This was unbelievable. I have to do this again. And I did. I asked my mother if I could use some of my hard-earned job money to go to Allied Radio and buy a shortwave radio kit. That weekend my father drove me to that wonderful store so I could buy a Knight Kit Space Spanner radio. It took me two days to build it, and I’ll never forget that first time I turned it on and tuned in a foreign broadcast

station. My eyes popped out of my head when I started listening to Hams talk to each other on 40-meters. I was hooked.

Soon after that I would race to the local drug store in my neighborhood after school to see if the latest issue of *Popular Electronics* was seated in its usual spot in the middle of the magazine rack. There it was, standing out from the rest of the printed materials, staring me in the face. I paid the clerk for the magazine, along with a few extra pennies for a pretzel, and off I went to our family apartment on Chicago’s northwest side.

Sitting in front of my treasured shortwave receiver I turned the pages of “Pop-Tronics” and drooled. My eager mind absorbed the various articles on building projects, but one story in particular drew me in like a magnet. It was a short piece on how to build a one-tube, “Sandwich Box” transmitter. Little did I know that a year later I would take my Novice Amateur Ra-

dio test and join the ever-growing crowd of young Hams in Albany Park as a full-fledged member of this great fraternity.

I was first licensed in 1956 and eager to get on 40-meter CW. The problem was I couldn’t afford gear. I dug out the old issue of “Pop-Tronics,” scrounged around the house for a small wooden box, and started building the one-tube, 6AQ5, “Sandwich Box” rig.

Sherwin, K9CDJ, who lived across the street from me, lent his small power supply for my new rig, and showed me how to build an antenna coupler. I used a wire stretched out on the back porch and I was in business. One Novice crystal; one super-regen receiver; and a one-tube transmitter! What else could a kid ask for?

The crowning glory was my first CW, DX contact at 4 a.m., on the 40-Novice band, when I hooked up with an LU7. I went to school with a smile on my face, and knew from that moment on that Ham radio would always be in my life, thanks to *Popular Electronics* and a miniscule savings account that opened the door for me. ■

*“...I turned
the pages of
‘Pop-Tronics’
and drooled.”*



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From Here to Begali

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Elliott Medrich, W6VFU

I have been a CW kind of guy since I was first licensed in 1960. My mentor, Josh—then K2MMS, now N7XM—was all business CW, and he taught me well. As for equipment, I quickly graduated from a straight key, to the venerable Vibroplex original bug, and on to the Vibroplex Vibrokeyer (I think that was what it was called back then) for my Hallicrafters HA-1 electronic keyer. (Remember that?)

My key requirements, way back then, were quite specific. I preferred a tight fit. I did not want the paddle to move more than was absolutely necessary. I wanted to set the key so that the slightest touch would send a string of dots and dashes—personal taste. As I recall, those many years ago, the old Vibroplex was just fine. I could adjust the springs sufficiently to meet my needs, and, for the most part, the springs stayed that way, and almost never needed adjustment.

As with so many of us, life intervened and I took, well, a 35-year vacation from radio, returning in 2000 with renewed interest in the world of DX. I found my CW skills were still there, embedded in my subconscious, like a second language learned while young. But what to do for equipment?

Actually, I did not think about it much. My old Vibroplex was lost somewhere over the decades, so I went out and bought another Vibrokeyer, expecting the same comfortable feel I experienced way back when.

Didn't happen. With all due respect to Vibroplex, I found that I simply could not achieve the kinds of adjustments I required. I struggled along with always-problematic springs and contacts that never maintained their settings—try sending 5Z4DZ at 40-wpm and instead getting an incessant and uncontrollable babble of dots—I finally realized that a change was in order. The question was, change to what? What would I match with my Logikey K-3?

Now, I must confess, I had not mastered iambic, quite the revolution during my years away. But it was clear to me that it was time to make the leap, as the best keys seemed to be iambic by nature. Here I enter dangerous territory. Key choices are all about personal preference, and I am clear on that point. I asked around. I spoke with excellent CW ops. I read the reflectors. But in particular, I read a long article by renowned CW guy DJ8GO: “High Noon on Paddle Hill” at eham.net, April 8, 2005. Ulrich had it all together. He knew the issues and, most important, he knew the options.

I exchanged a few e-mails with Ulrich and, placing his suggestions against those of others, especially N7XM, Josh, I made a decision sight unseen. Go Begali. Why Begali? First and foremost, I had to get that touch thing squared away. No margin for error here. I absolutely insisted on trouble-free keying, with very close contacts.

So issue one was easy—magnetic rather than spring action. Further, as I came to understand the adjustment issues, I realized it was possible to independently adjust each side of the Begali Classic paddle. High thread counts make spacing and tension adjustments extremely precise; and they hold their settings. Rock solid. Heavy base so it does not move around—put it in position, sit down, and it's exactly where it's “supposed” to be—never moves a millimeter. Equally important, since the Begali is not cheap, I was able to persuade the XYL that not only was it going to last my lifetime, but that it was a true objet d'art.



Elliott Medrich, W6VFU

*“...try sending
5Z4DZ at
40-wpm...”*



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North American QRP CW Club

Join Us!

Larry Makoski, W2LJ



WANTED: Members for new Amateur Radio club. Applicants must have a consuming passion for Morse code and QRP using simple wire antennas. Applicants must be prepared to leave their dues in their wallets.

The only requirements for joining are that you share the founders' love of basic Amateur Radio operating. Founded by Tom Mitchell,

KB3LFC, and John Shannon, K3WWP, in October 2004, the North American QRP CW Club already boasts a membership exceeding 900 Radio Amateurs in all 50 United States, seven Canadian provinces and 25 DX countries.

The club's philosophy is a simple one. As founder and president, Tom Mitchell states:

We realize QRP and CW operation do not appeal to everyone. We have no "axe to grind" with the QRO (high power) fraternity. We recognize 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. 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.

The NAQCC charges no dues, in fact, the official club motto is: "No Dues, Just Do." To honor that credo, the NAQCC holds monthly weeknight CW Sprints and sponsors operating awards and other fun on-the-air activities. One of the most challenging and popular operating events is the "QSO a Day" award. This certificate can be earned by getting on the bands every day and making one or two QRP CW QSOs daily. If you can't commit to an entire year's effort, there are plenty of categories in the requirements that can fit just about anyone's busy schedule. For details on all the Sprints, awards and events, please check out

the NAQCC Web site at:
<http://www.arm-tek.net/~yoel/>

Skeptics Should Consider the Following:

One reason the NAQCC is a QRP CW club is that QRP and CW go together so well. CW takes up about 100 Hz of spectrum whereas SSB uses about 2,000 Hz. The average power density for CW, given the above values, is one Watt/Hz and for SSB .05 Watts/Hz. So, if we compare the two modes we could say that gain in using CW over SSB is $\text{Gain (dB)} = 10 \times \log(1/.05)$ which is equal to 13dB. What does this mean? It means that five Watts of CW is as efficient as 100 Watts of SSB. Just a little food for thought.

What is QRP? It is SKILL, NOT POWER, and yes, it really does work. Try it, you'll like it. Join the North American QRP CW Club—it's free—and remember, our motto is: "No Dues, Just Do!" ■

*"No Dues,
Just Do!"*



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Product Review

DX-Pro FFT-1 Fully Featured Kilowatt Transceiver

Dick Sylvan, W9CBT

We were fortunate to get our hands on a beta test model of the new DX-Pro FFT-1, full-featured, all-band kilowatt transceiver. This new transceiver addresses the many requirements today's modern Hams require. Our initial evaluation is that no other Ham transceiver on the market today has these unique and useful features. The designers have applied practical technology to create a truly outstanding rig.

First Impressions

When we pulled the FFT-1 out of the box, we were impressed with its size and weight. Weighing in at a hefty 97 pounds, it is truly a staggering unit. All controls are accessible and easy to use. With its own self-contained power supply, it is completely portable; getting its power from the built-in generator operated by a hand crank.

Sensitivity and selectivity are superb. I was very impressed with some of the new features, particularly the built-in, hydraulically operated, telescoping tower topped by a vertical antenna.

Features

The features of the FFT1 are almost too numerous to mention. The designers addressed the needs of Hams that previously have been overlooked in nearly all other modern transceivers. Here is what I found:

Telescoping tower and antenna—What a great idea! No more dealing with antenna restrictions and locations. When needed, the antenna emerges from the cabinet. Finished operating? The tower neatly retracts and a door flips down to cover it. Hand crank-operated power generator—Turn the crank for about one hour and it powers the rig at up to a kilowatt for a full five minutes! You can even use the FFT-1 outdoors.

Green tuning-eye tube—Remember them in pre-WWII Zenith radios? A feature missing from other

contemporary transceivers, but incorporated into this unit. The green eye closes as the signal is tuned in—It gave me the creeps when it stared back at me.

Two-slice pop-up toaster—I found this feature particularly appealing. I like to operate before breakfast, and it is nice to be able to enjoy some fresh toast right at the rig.

Slide-out silverware tray—Really handy. This will encourage eating in the shack. Features compartments for knives, forks and spoons. The xyl might not like this feature.

Electric hot plate—One of my favorite features. No longer do you have to tell your contact that you have to shut down the rig for a while to go up to the kitchen for a cup of coffee. Brew it and keep it warm right on top of the rig.

Napkin dispenser—Speaks for itself. Handy to wipe off toast crumbs from your mouth.

QSL dispenser—Wow! What an idea. A push of a button delivers a QSL card already filled out with postage attached. (How do they do that?)

High-Tech speaker system—A handy, detachable, amplified ear trumpet. I really like this feature. Most Hams don't hear well anyway, so the detachable ear trumpet is great to take to the movies or Ham meetings etc. Kudos to the designers!

Built-in keyer/paddle and hand key—Don't worry where to put these, they're built right into the cabinet.



DX-Pro FFT-1 XCVR
(with apologies to
Rube Goldberg)

*"Kudos to the
designers!"*



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Mailbag

I saw your posting about the newsletter in an Amateur Radio newsgroup. I visited the site and loved the newsletter, so I subscribed. I'm in the process of learning Morse code to upgrade my license, so this will be nice reading along the way.

Steve, N1TYH

Enjoy the newsletter. Here's a simple suggestion:

Instead of the file name K9YA_9_2005.pdf, use the name K9YA_2005_09.pdf

The advantages of this are that the issues will be filed in order in the computer or on disc over the years. The disadvantages are none. Thanks again,

Mike, N4NT

I enjoyed reading the latest issue of the *K9YA Telegraph*, as always.

I particularly enjoyed the book review Brasspounders—*Young Telegraphers During the Civil War*.

I do have one request; where possible, could you include the ISBN number for any books that you review? It is much easier to locate a copy of a book, particularly an older book, when you have the ISBN number.

Thanks for publishing a great newsletter! CW Forever!

Jim, KAØIQT

I just received my September issue of *K9YA Telegraph* via email. You did it AGAIN! Superb job! The best available!

Steve, WØOOW

I just have to say I love reading your newsletter, keep up the good work.

Nicholas, VE6OBS

Just wanted to let you know what a GREAT monthly newsletter you have. Full of information and NOT technical like *QST*. I would even pay to subscribe to this !! Really !!! It always has something for everyone from beginner to old timer. I especially enjoyed this issue with the article about the FISTS CW Club of which I have been a member for a few years (#4239). I'm also going to try check into some of those slow CW nets on Wednesday evenings now that I am no longer working that shift.

Keep up the good work folks and thank you to all involved !! My hat is off.....

Steve, WBØQQT

Congratulations for the interesting web site and magazine. Many thanks.

Andrea, IK1PMR / AI4CA

I am so happy that I discovered you fellas. The latest issue (my first) is simply outstanding. I will really enjoy reading it. I may even print it on my color printer because it is so beautiful. MNY TNX! DIT DIT

Ken, N9VV

Your *Telegraph* publication is well-done and nice to look at, but its focus on Morse proficiency for Amateur Radio operators makes it seem narrow and exclusionary, especially seeing as the FCC is going to do away with the Morse test soon.

I have nothing against Hams who like and use Morse code, as I've used it myself in the past, but I never did take a shine to the mode and consider anyone who focuses on it to the exclusion of other modes to be inextricably mired in the past.

Thank you,

Jackie, KCØODY

Early commercial radio broadcasting was still sinking its foundations when, in 1924, there arose the *Radio Broadcast* magazine competition, "Who is to Pay for Broadcasting and How?" where a prize of \$500 was offered for:

A workable plan which shall take into account the problems in present radio broadcasting and propose a practical solution. How, for example, are the restrictions now imposed by the music copyright law to be adjusted to the peculiar conditions of broadcasting? How is the complex radio patent situation to be unsnarled so that broadcasting may develop? Should broadcasting stations be allowed to advertise?

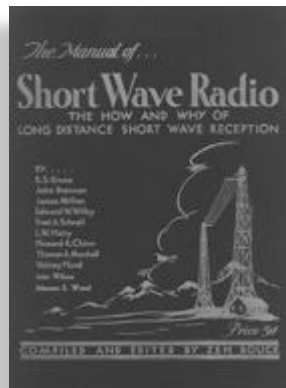
On the panel of contest judges: "Zeh Bouck, one of the best known radio authors in America."

He Soars

Not despairing the handicap that necessitated his use of crutches, he became a celebrated expert in the then embryonic field of avionics. Putting theory into practice, he was the operator of 2XBQ aboard a Stinson Detroiter, a single-engine, high-wing monoplane, on the first flight from the U.S. mainland to Bermuda on April 1, 1930. The flight was sponsored by his employer, the Pilot Radio and Tube Corporation of Brooklyn (subsequently he would work for J.H. Millen), so the Stinson was dubbed "Pilot Radio."

According to a New York Times article he maintained "two-way radio communication" between the plane and the "Manhattan radio station" of the newspaper. "The dots and dashes were so clear that the words were not repeated as is in ordinary code practice."

America's love affair with radio was equaled only by its infatuation with aviation. A July 18, 1929 news story describes the "Aerial Hitch-Hiking Couple," Mr. and Mrs. Lucien Zacharoff, "two young Brooklynites" who were "...crossing the continent by aeroplane, 'begging' free rides at various airports..." "Zeh Bouck, then chief engineer of Pilot Radio Laboratories, assisted by getting them aboard the Stinson on a flight from Roosevelt Field on Long Island to the airport at Albany, New York.



A Flight to Buenos Aires

Bouck was editor of *The Manual of Short Wave Radio*, copyright 1930, by the National Company. The *Manual* included articles by radio pioneers including James Millen and Fred H. Schnell. Schnell, 1MO, was one of the team of Hams who, in November 1923, inaugurated "...two-way amateur transatlantic communication..." with stations in France on 110- and 100-meters.

Bouck's article in the *Manual*, "Short Wave Reception, Circling the World With Simple Receivers," discusses his flight to Buenos Aires and the global network of commercial shortwave radio stations that facilitated international radiotelephone calls.

The foreword to *Trouble Finder and Service Manual*, compiled by Zeh Bouck, M.I.R.E., Experimenters Publications, Inc., N.Y., 1930, says this about him [note: edited for clarity]:

We feel that this entire subject is one which can interest every radio owner and serviceman, and that there are few men in the country who could handle the work as masterfully as Zeh Bouck.

Mr. Bouck has been very active in radio for many years. He has contributed to many of the leading periodicals; has designed and has built almost every type of radio receiver and transmitter imaginable, is at present consulting engineer for several radio companies; a licensed radio operator and, incidentally,

Managing Editor of the new Mackinnon-Fly magazine, "Aero News."

In the selection of the material for use with the gleanings from Mr. Bouck's pen, we believe our readers will agree that the choice has been excellent and that this volume sets a new pace in the service field.

To convince young people they could financially succeed in the razor thin days of the Great Depression he wrote, *How to Make Money in Radio Servicing*, N.Y., Teck Publishing Corporation, 1932, 130 p. and *Making a Living in Radio*, Mc-Graw, N.Y., 1935, 222 p.

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Built-in, mini color TV—Great idea! I like to watch Cubs' baseball games while operating. Now I can view them right in front of me without craning my neck to see the TV across the room.

Credit Card Slot—Worrying how you might pay for this unit? No problem. A handy credit card reader will accept your credit card and issue a receipt. (Accepts Visa, MC and AMEX only)

Non-slip rubber feet—My favorite feature. No more having the rig sliding around the desk. This rig has four solid feet. In keeping with today's casual look, the feet are wearing non-slip rubber flip-flops. This baby's going nowhere!

Bottom line. All I can say is I have waited for this unit for years. What a rig! I asked what the selling price is and the engineer said, "If you have to ask, you can't afford it." I guess that tells you something. ■

[Editor's note: Since this article was written, the FFT-1 manufacturing facility in Outer Mongolia mysteriously burned to the ground. All tooling and components were destroyed. The company has since declared bankruptcy. Sorry, this unit is no longer available.]

Ham Lingo "Pirate Radio"



"Avast Ye Lubbers—I Really am Operating a Pirate Radio Station!"

It wasn't all technical books and manuals, Bouck was frequently featured in popular and pulp magazines—a few titles and their publications: "Tails Up!" *Cosmopolitan*, July 1932; "Signal Eighty-two," *Top-Notch*, May 1936; "Staged at 10,000," *Clues*, June 1937; and "Our Radio Amateurs," (co-authored with Carl Dreher), *Harper's*, October 1941.

That's just a brief glance at the very short, but very full life of Zeh Bouck, a noteworthy and tireless participant, innovator, promoter and memoirist of radio in the first half of the 20th century. ■

CONTINUED - BEGALI FROM PAGE 3

But, actually, this is not a Begali review, so much as an appreciation of a newfound friend, which makes CW all the more pleasurable.

A key is a very personal piece of equipment. This is my story. How about you? What works for me may not work for you. Have you found a key that makes your heart skip a beat every time you sit down to pound some brass? Tell your story. It's part of the adventure. ■

Have a Ham Radio Holiday Story to Share?

*Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire,
Heathkits 'Neath the Tree*

Do you have a Ham Radio holiday story you would like to share?

Good fellowship on the air. Memorable holiday QSOs? Your radio club's Christmas party. Local Ham Radio holiday traditions? Successful wish list placement strategies? Your favorite wish list item—did you get it? Delaying your family's holiday dinner to get "just one more" new kit component soldered in place. Delaying your family's holiday dinner to get "just one more" QSO into the logbook? Displaying the shack to visiting family members: "You mean you can talk around the world on that thing?" and "Why does that clock read 23:30?" The annual quandary: Ring in the New Year with 'nog or Straight Key Night natter?

Spread glad tidings! The *K9YA Telegraph* is now read by Amateur Radio operators in 90 countries.

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