

K9YA Telegraph

Robert F. Heytow Memorial Radio Club

Volume 3, Issue 4, April 2006



The K9YA Telegraph Story

Something About Us

Philip Cala-Lazar, K9PL

It was all Mike Dinelli's, N9BOR, idea. In late 2002 he suggested the launch of a new e-Zine as the voice of the Robert F. Heytow Memorial Radio Club, K9YA. Mike's concept was elegant in its simplicity:

to produce a publication that reflected our collective view of Amateur Radio, i.e., it's fun, it's rewarding, it's inclusive and it's all enveloping in its multi-faceted opportunities to explore. We were going to publish stories depicting radio's many joys written by authors who wanted to share their experiences, their knowledge, the personalities and pleasures—the good news about Amateur Radio—with the rest of us. If you've ever read the evergreen American magazine *Grit* you have a head start on perceiving our vision.

As for manning the e-Zine staff: I perform duties as editor and lead columnist; Mike coined the *K9YA Telegraph* name and ably performs as layout artist, business manager and major domo. A bit later, Dick, W9CBT, joined us (see: *K9YA Telegraph*, August 2004, Pg. 5): he is staff cartoonist, illustrator and a frequent contributor of articles.

Sure, putting it all together absorbs some of what would be our on-air time, but considering all the positive feedback the *Telegraph* elicits, we consider the effort very well spent and eminently rewarding. What better way to "operate" when the bands are dead or when static crashes dominate the HF spectrum than by spinning a tale or two? After all,

isn't creating the *Telegraph* just another operating mode?

Providing the *K9YA Telegraph* to the Amateur Radio community is our way to give back to the service some of what it has given us. We have been gratified by the support of our readers throughout the Amateur Radio community, worldwide. Not only do our subscribers enjoy reading the *K9YA Telegraph*, but also many have put their keyboards where

they've found their joy and submitted articles covering a range of topics. To paraphrase, at the *Telegraph* it's business as usual "with a lot of help from our friends."

As one of our promotional blurbs puts it: "The *K9YA Telegraph* contains the stories and features most wanted by our subscribers because

it is written by our subscribers." So, if you want to share your adventures, experiences, recollections, construction articles, product overviews and technical expertise with other operators, we'd be pleased to see them published in the *K9YA Telegraph*. Our authors' guide is available at: http://k9ya.org/write_for_us.htm.

“...the good news about Amateur Radio...”

Inside This Issue...

<i>The K9YA Telegraph Story</i>	Page 1
<i>Straight Key CW Lives</i>	Page 2
<i>Look, Up in the Sky, It's a Mud Duck</i>	Page 4
<i>O Fifteen! My Fifteen!</i>	Page 6
<i>Korean War Mars Operation</i>	Page 7

Philip Cala-Lazar, K9PL
Editor

Mike Dinelli, N9BOR
Layout

Dick Sylvan, W9CBT
Staff Cartoonist



Robert F. Heytow
Memorial Radio Club

www.k9ya.org
telegraph@k9ya.org

Straight Key CW Lives!

Walt Fair, Jr., WSALT



Walt, YV1/W5ALT
Operating SKCC from
Maracaibo

I sat down in my chair and reflected a moment as I powered up the rig, checked my tuner settings and arranged my pencil, logbook and trusty CW key in front of me on the desk. Outside some people were reveling in some sort of celebration, some a little tipsy, others tired from dancing. Across the street was a cozy gathering, people obviously enjoying the company of close family and dear friends. Inside, not only in my shack, but

also in other places known only to the practitioners, there was a quieter celebration—hundreds of Radio Amateurs quietly clicking away with ancient straight keys, practicing an art that some people keep saying will one day go away.

Prelude

The clock in the shack showed 2345z as I turned on the rig, checked the connector for my trusty straight key, limbered up my arm with a few strings of VVV VVV VVV into the dummy load, and then switched to my short dipole. Tuning across the 40-meter band, I heard the normal South American SSB stations, then what sounded like someone using RTTY, a Pactor station rasping at odd intervals, nothing unusual. Venturing down into the “forbidden frequencies,” I found a few fellows clipping along in CW at a blistering pace. How wonderful it must be to be conversant at that speed, to me, it sounded like magic, magic I couldn’t fully decipher.

Venture

So, as the clock slowly advanced, I moved back up to the Novice band where I knew someone would be listening and happy to exchange reports or chew the rag at a speed more comfortable to my ears and easier on my wrist; a safety zone where my mistakes would be ignored as easily as I ignored the mistakes

of others, figuring they were probably as nervous and embarrassed as I was. Sure enough, as dusk came, a tentative CQ CQ CQ crept out of the noise, and then another, then another, until the Novice band was alive with signals I could copy in between the foreign broadcast stations.

Success

Sometime later I had run across a new friend I didn’t even know a few hours ago. How long had we been chatting? The clock said 45 minutes, but that couldn’t be. Maybe I had written the time down wrong in my logbook? Then, with horror, I realized I actually had a thought while listening to the CW coming through my headphones, and I didn’t even miss a word!

TNX INFO OM--ITS VY NICE TO MEET U--
MY XYL IS FROM THERE--BTW THE RIG HR
IS HB--KEY IS J38 J38--IM STILL LEARNING

HOW TO USE IT HI HI--BTU,
droned out of my headphones as the signal pierced the noise level. In between writing down the letters, I suddenly had the thought that inside of a few minutes I had copied the equivalent of several scores of words, a feat I once thought would be impossible. “Why that would be enough to easily pass the 13-wpm code test, maybe

even the 20-wpm test!” I said to myself, while making a note to try the W1AW CW Qualifying Run. And to think I had hated CW for so long.

Joys—Yesterday & Today

Now, the reader might wonder if I’m waxing nostalgic, for surely those sorts of experiences were quite common when I first got my Novice license in 1970 and sent out a tentative CQ CQ CQ DE WN5CLS with sweating hands, and then didn’t know what to do when someone actually answered and I finally recognized my call! In fact, my Novice logbook still has the notation of my CQ with no answer. Only I, and some other unknown Ham who called me in September 1970, know that I really did get an answer to the CQ. And only I know that I instantly froze

“And to think I had hated CW for so long.”



Robert F. Heytow
Memorial Radio Club

www.k9ya.org
telegraph@k9ya.org

K9YA Telegraph

and couldn't move my hand to answer back until it was too late, then had to wait until my heart stopped pounding to work up enough nerve to try again. I still clearly remember the mixture of excitement that someone was actually answering me, mixed with the anxiety of not knowing what to do next.

Certainly, every evening the Novice bands came alive with hesitating Novices finding new friends, dodging the 40m SWBC stations, struggling to copy just a little faster, and occasionally tuning through the lower frequencies longing to work DX and wondering what the high class operators chatted about in their forbidden spectrum. Most of us remember the time when someone casually mentioned we should upgrade, because they had been sending along at 15-wpm and we didn't even realize it!

A Novel Concept

Every once in a while there is an idea that is so fundamental, so obvious, that it only occurs to a few, or maybe just to one person. In the middle of the 20th century, such an idea occurred to someone, or to some group, and the Novice Class license was created. That single stroke of brilliance served as the doorway for thousands of entries into the wonderful, magical world of Amateur Radio. Fortunately, I was one who entered through that door.

But the specific things mentioned at the beginning of this article didn't happen in 1970, nor any time in the last century. And it wasn't the annual Straight Key Night on New Years Day, either. They happened in 2006 and the celebration outside wasn't New Years, but Mardi Gras (Carnaval). There were no 6L6 or 6146 rigs warming the room with their glow, no knife switch to go from transmit to receive, and no new Novice licensees. The logbook wasn't a pad of paper, but a notebook computer and the rig had a full color digital display with a spectrum scope and digital signal processing. The truth is that, in 2006, whether through pure luck or stroke of genius, a group of Hams stumbled onto a fundamental idea: The Straight Key Century Club.

SKCC is Born

The Straight Key Century Club (SKCC) is really quite simple in concept. Seeing that many people enjoyed participating in the annual Straight Key Night (SKN), why not make it a year-round activity? And why not offer a certificate for 100 QSOs using a straight key with SKCC members? And,

since everyone is using straight keys, why not invite all the people who hesitate to try CW on the air because their speed is low or they lack confidence? Thus, in early 2006, the idea was born and thanks to hard work by Tom, KC9ECI; Melinda, KI4CIA; and Gordon, N6WK, it didn't just stay an idea, but was acted upon and implemented.

SKCC already boasts around 1,700 members and several have already earned their Centurion certificates for working 100 other SKCC members. There are members in all 50 states and several foreign countries and SKCC WAS has been earned for working all states with a mechanical key. The Yahoo SKCC Group and the SKCC Forum have discussions of the best rigs for CW, the fine aspects of various hand keys and bugs, talk of antennas and QRP and schedules to meet on the air with other hams, new and old, who share the same love for the art of CW.



SKCC Artillery for
YV1W5ALT

*"...working
the world at
comfortable
straight key
speeds..."*

The idea behind SKCC is particularly simple: Enjoy the annual ARRL SKN all year-round. The only rules are to use a mechanical key (straight key, bug, sideswiper, but no electronic keyers) and to have fun on the air. If that sounds interesting to you or someone you know, whether new or old to CW, rag chews or certificate chasers, you need to find out about the SKCC.

Whether you want to meet others taking their first trembling steps into the world of CW, want to improve your CW operating or are an old timer who wants to encourage CW, SKCC is probably for you.

If, in 2006, you tune through the old Novice bands and hear activity, it's not just nostalgia and it's not your imagination. There really are a group of hams, new and old, CW experts and novices, working the world at comfortable straight key speeds, making new friends and trying to perfect the art of manual CW.

Details and recommended frequencies are on the group's web site at www.skccgroup.com and also on the Yahoo group "skcc." Long live CW! ■



Robert F. Heytow
Memorial Radio Club

www.k9ya.org
telegraph@k9ya.org

Look, Up In the Sky, It's a Mud Duck!

Philip Cala-Lazar, K9PL & Dan Thompson, WB4GUK



Dan, WB4GUK, Preparing to Start the Engine of his Giant Mud Duck with 14' Wingspan

Dan Thompson's, WB4GUK, big, slow flying, 15-pound Mud Duck R/C model aircraft boasts a nine-foot wingspan and sports a wing-mounted video camera. Assembled from a kit, the plane is propelled by a .90 cubic inch, one-cylinder, two-horsepower engine. The aircraft's color video camera can pan and tilt 90 degrees and offers Dan an authentic bird's-eye view on a video monitor at speeds down to a

leisurely 8 m.p.h.

He says, "It's intriguing to be able to do it. You have the same view you would have in the airplane, but your peripheral vision is limited. It's more akin to flying a flight simulator on a computer." In addition to the monitor, he can wear a special pair of goggles that allows a split view where he can see the aircraft from the ground and an aerial view through the airborne video camera.

WB4GUK believes his miniature reconnaissance aircraft would be useful in patrolling the skies over

large ranches and farms while providing real-time images of distant acreage.

Dan and his Mud Duck have been featured on FOX News and the subject of an article in the Louisville, Kentucky Courier-Journal newspaper.

In addition to flying model aircraft, he is a licensed pilot and the owner of two Piper aircraft, a J-3 Cub and a Pacer. Dan is a consulting computer engineer.

In Dan's Words By Dan Thompson, WB4GUK

I was always interested in the electronics field. I went to a vocational school in the 50's where I learned about radio. During high school, I repaired home-type radios and specialized in automobile radios for spending money—the radios of that era used tubes.

However, my interest was also aviation and a way to marry these two passions was the radio control of model airplanes. I started building and flying model airplanes in 1962, but wanted to be able to do experimentation with the radio. The only way to do this was

to have a Ham ticket. I procrastinated for five years and finally bit the bullet and learned Morse code. I obtained a Technician ticket in 1967. I did have a home-based 6-meter rig for a couple of years.

"The only way to do this was to have a Ham ticket."

Full Scale

In 1969 I purchased a full-scale airplane and installed a Lafayette Radio 6-meter AM rig. It was not common during this time for a Ham rig to be in an airplane. One day I was flying and gave out a CQ call. A fellow answered me and he said I was 5x9 and what was my QTH? I answered, "Georgetown, Kentucky" He said, "WOW, I am in Maysville, Kentucky in my garage and I was going to put this Sixer



Live Video Feed from Mud Duck on Short Final



Robert F. Heytow
Memorial Radio Club

www.k9ya.org
telegraph@k9ya.org

K9YA Telegraph

in storage and decided to turn it on one last time and heard your call.” I should note here for the younger among us that the Sixer was a Heathkit “Lunch Box” comprising a 5-watt transmitter and super-regenerative receiver. Astounded he was getting out so far, he asked, “How high is your antenna?” I replied, “10,000 feet.” Now, that blew his mind until I finally told him I was in an airplane.

In the early 70’s I was a member of the Bluegrass Amateur Radio Club, but typical Ham Radio was never my main interest although I maintain my membership in the ARRL.

The Mud Duck

Tom Chipley designed the Mud Duck airplane. The 9-foot Mud Duck pictured is made of foam-core board. It is a big and slow airplane and makes for a great video platform because of its slow speed.

An alcohol-fueled Super Tigre .90 engine powers this plane. The R/C system I use is an ACE MicroPro 8000 transmitter and an ACE ProStar receiver on 50 MHz. Futaba servos are used to move the controls and the camera. The camera has two servos to control pan and tilt. The range on a typical setup is about two miles. However, most all radios have more range than the human eye. If you fly the plane too far to where you can’t see its attitude, you have lost it. This distance depends on the size of the plane and even with the 9-foot Mud Duck that’s about 3/4 mile.



In this plane, I used a video system made by Plane Talk, which operates on 2.4 GHz. This system was purchased in 1996 for \$1,800 and has a five-mile range, since then the cost has dropped significantly. The second system I purchased (<http://www.wirelessvideocameras.com>) cost \$500 and was installed in an electric-powered plane. That unit has a 1.5 mile range. I also purchased a micro video system for less than \$100, where the camera and transmitter unit is as small as a postage stamp, but its range is limited to about 1,000 feet. In total, I have three planes with downlinked video.

In order to prevent having to assemble all the supporting equipment every time I want to use the video, I built a box containing all the receivers and a recorder. The flight is recorded on an 8 mm tape unit in the box. The special goggles I use are no longer manufactured, but there are others that could be used.

In the R/C world there are a number of Hams—in my current club of 150 members there are four of us. As with most Hams, the number who actually experiment with radio and video is limited. ■



2.4 GHz Camera Mounted Below the Wing of WB4GUK’s R/C Model Airplane



Robert F. Heytow
Memorial Radio Club

www.k9ya.org
telegraph@k9ya.org

O Fifteen! My Fifteen!

Gerry Lynch, GØRTN



Gerry Lynch, GØRTN

I.

O Fifteen! My Fifteen! You bring me such DX;
You open up to such far lands, I love you more than sex;
The band is clear, new ones I hear, the ops are all exulting,
While hands do turn the dial so slow, so fast rare ones are coming:

But O heart! heart! heart!
O, the sunspots all have fled,
In minimum my Fifteen lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

II.

O Fifteen! My Fifteen! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the beam is strung—for you the Morse code trills;
For you big amps and matchèd stacks—for you the bands a-crowding;
For you they call, the swaying mass, so eagerly dials turning;

Here Fifteen! DX queen!
This arm beneath your head;
It is some dream that thanks to Sol,
You've fallen cold and dead.

III.

My Fifteen does not answer, her depths are lone and still;
We search the Hertz with faces wan, she has no pulse nor will;
Three delta loops perch on the tower, the gamma matching done;
We watch the cluster spots with tears, as top banders have fun;

Exult, phone ops on seven-five!
But I, with mournful tread,
Turn on the rig—and Fifteen lies,
Fallen cold and dead.



Robert F. Heytow
Memorial Radio Club

www.k9ya.org
telegraph@k9ya.org

Chicago Tribune Prints Morse Code Insights

K9YA TELEGRAPH Staffer Quoted

When's the last time you saw Morse code characters reproduced on the front page of a big city newspaper? Any newspaper? Any time? The Chicago Tribune did just that on the front page of its March 2, 2006 issue. There, a printed series of dots and dashes was followed by: "Translation: Morse code fans sending out an SOS." The article, written by John McCormick, Tribune staff reporter and Ham Radio operator (not noted in the story), offered a balanced discussion of the Morse code testing debate.

K9YA *Telegraph* staffer Mike Dinelli was one of the reporter's sources: "Although his radio is capable of transmitting voice with near-perfect clarity, Mike Dinelli prefers to tap away on a Morse code key when he sends messages around the world to other radio hobbyists. 'It's part of the romance of radio,' said Dinelli..."

The article featured comments from pro-testing Hams, anti-testing Hams and Capt. Kevin Hooley, commanding officer of the Navy's Center for Information Dominance in Florida.

Although the article, which stressed Ham Radio's invaluable assistance in disasters and featured an historical overview of Morse code, broke no new ground, it did include a significant quote from Capt. Hooley concerning recent operations in the Middle East: "...there were discussions about whether coalition partners had the (Morse code) capability. 'We never had to resort to it, but it was sometimes asked as a possibility,' he said. 'It is a skill that we have to keep.'" ■

Help Wanted

The K9YA Field Day Team is looking for a few good Hams! Positions available June 24-25 in northern Illinois.

Satellite Operator - If you have the skills and equipment to demonstrate a satellite contact, please join us.

Non-Traditional Modes (APRS, ATV, SSTV) - We are looking for experienced operators to supply equipment and expertise to demonstrate one or more non-traditional modes.

Alternate Power - Set-up, install and demonstrate solar or wind, battery charging system.

Contact us at: k9ya@k9ya.org

Korean War MARS Operations

Paul Signorelli, WØRW

I was only a teenager in the 1950s and my brother-in-law was in Korea, so I was interested in helping. I joined 6th Army MARS and one of the opportunities I had was to run phone patches (ZAFs) for the troops. I had a 3-element beam and a 100W Heathkit DX-100. Conditions were good then and I was able to run a lot of phone patches.

We used MARS frequencies (27,994 KHz); my main contact was Jack, AD4BE (W1YYD), in Wonju, Korea. He lined up the callers every day and when I got home from school we ran the "ZAFs." He was running a BC-610 into a Sterba curtain. That was all in the 1955-1956 period. I still have his QSL card.

There were Marines at KA2AD/KA2NY in Yokosuka and some on Okinawa. USAF MARS Station ZLK was in Christchurch, New Zealand, operated by Ted, W6PTB, and W8TSE, Jack.

My phone patch was an old power transformer, the 110V winding went to the phone line, the 6 VAC winding went to the receiver speaker and the mic input went to the HV winding with adjustment pots.

XYLs in the U.S. really appreciated the calls...

Many other MARS Stations all over the country ran phone patches for the troops. I still have a few PRC-6 from the Korean War and a few BC-611 from WWII as souvenirs. ■

Ham Quips DICK SYLVAN, W9CBT



COPYRIGHT © 2006 DICK SYLVAN, W9CBT

IF KING TUT WAS A HAM

K9YA Telegraph



Robert F. Heytow
Memorial Radio Club

www.k9ya.org
telegraph@k9ya.org