

K9YA Telegraph

Robert F. Heytow Memorial Radio Club

Volume 5, Issue 5, May 2008



Hail to the Chief

QRZ, Mr. President

Philip Cala-Lazar, K9PL

Especially appropriate in this presidential election year is what turns up while searching the *Public Papers of the Presidents of The United States* for the terms “amateur radio” and “ham radio.” The documents at the University of Michigan

site include material from the terms of Presidents Hoover, Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush and Clinton. Here are some solid hits for Presidents Clinton, G.H.W. Bush, Johnson, Roosevelt and Hoover. <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/p/ppotpus>

William J. Clinton, 1993-2001

June 22, 1993: Telephone Conversation With the Crew of the Space Shuttle *Endeavour* and an Exchange With Reporters

Astronaut Brian Duffy: *Mr. President, we find that using amateur radio is an excellent way of communicating with children all around the world, and we're able to excite them by using space and science. In letting them see space and science in action, we're able to excite them and hope they'll study harder.*

The President: *You have no idea. You may be on this mission creating thousands of scientists for the future just by the power of your example and by this direct communication. I think sometimes we underestimate the impact that human contact in an enormously impressive setting like this can have on children all across the world, not only those with whom you'll talk but millions of others who will just see it and know that it happened.* (Brian Duffy [1953-], N5WQW, aboard *Endeavour*, flight STS-57, June 21-July 1, 1993.)

1999: “The President also referred to the Team Eifel Amateur Radio Society.” (Team Eifel Amateur Radio Society [TEARS], DA1SP, Spangdahlem Air Base, Herforst, Germany.) <http://www.qsl.net/da1bt/>

George Herbert Walker Bush, 1989-1993

October 11, 1989: Toasts at the State Dinner for President Francesco Cossiga of Italy.

And Mr. President, when I asked my advisers about the secret of your success, they told me that you have an especially interesting method to keep in touch with Italian public opinion. I wonder how many Italian ham radio operators know that the fellow who signs off as Andy Capp is really the President of Italy? And sure enough— [laughter].

(Francesco Cossiga, IØFCG, president of Italy from 1985 to 1992 and 2006 inductee to the CQ Amateur Radio Hall of Fame.)

Lyndon Baines Johnson, 1963-1969

January 16, 1968, speaking at 5:45 p.m. in Room S-207 at the Capitol:

I am particularly grateful to Senator Mansfield and Senator Dirksen for asking me, and Senator Goldwater

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QSL Cards for Memories

Robert Underwood, KØRU



Rob Underwood, KØRU

Okay, those of you who know me well enough realize I've never been a fan of snail mail QSLs. Postage, cost of cards, envelopes, etc., just the whole process is a pain in the neck. I have to admit, when I first thought about not sending mail versions of QSL CARDS it was somewhat disappointing to me, but even small changes in the price of gasoline affects the way we drive, shop and vacation.

Consider the following: Cards cost me about \$120 per 1,500. Envelopes run \$20 to \$30 depending on type and where purchased. I take advantage of every bureau I can, whenever possible, especially the FISTS buro which is fantastic. I've been a FISTS member for over 10 years and simply love their QSL Card Bureau.

Follow the Money

Now, consider postage, okay, many of the hams I've e-mailed and the statements I've posted on qrz.com regarding this QSL card issue fail to realize the impact of postage. One hundred to 300 QSL cards per year adds up. Consider, 100 cards direct costs \$41 (before the recent raise in rates) in postage alone. Three hundred cards equals \$123. That's the price of a PSK interface or even a new 2m/70cm base antenna. When you're a big DX chaser and contester like myself the figures skyrocket. Consider this: For the most recent RTTY Round Up contest I have about 932 contacts in the log. I'll probably QSL 10%, that's just 93 cards, but that's just one weekend contest. I work many CW and PSK contests as well as FISTS contacts.

I keep a very detailed record of my QSL costs. About five years ago my XYL got on my tail for spending way too much money on postage and such. I told her she was crazy, those stamps (back then) are only 39 cents, it can't cost that much. Well, to my surprise in 2001 alone, I was spending over \$800 in postage, cards and

envelopes. 2006 was a busy year, costs increased to over \$1,500 (must be all that DX!), but in 2007 I busted the bank—\$1,763 in QSL postage and cards. Sending over 5,100 cards (despite many via bureau) adds up to a whopping \$1,763—the price of a new rig.

Electronic Countermeasures

I'm totally baffled why more operators don't take advantage of the Logbook of The World (LOTW) and eqsl.com. You say, "I want a hard copy." With eqsl you can get a hard copy, and they will even print and mail it to you for a fee. But many ops don't select this option because now the dollars are coming out of their pocket, i.e., station receiving the cards.

I've heard every excuse there is including, "The ARRL won't accept the eQSL." SO WHAT. Be grateful, the next guy you work will send you a direct QSL card; in the meantime, enjoy your savings by using one of the electronic methods available.

A Happy Coincidence

On 40-meters one evening I'm doing the usual CW ragchewing and hear someone on Olivia. Olivia is a digital mode that uses your computer's soundcard or an interface. Curious who might be using this form of communications I fired up the computer and executed my digital program, MixW, which I simply love.

It supports many digital formats and makes working the digital modes a lot of fun. Tuning the Olivia station I found N8NVL calling CQ.

N8NVL DE KØRU KØRU KKK, he quickly responded and a wonderful QSO ensued. Talking with Bernie I discovered he lives about 15 miles from where I grew up. That set me thinking about the year 1970 and my first ham license while living in the big village of North Bradley, Michigan. Excited to be talking with someone from home, I told Bernie where we used to live and added that my father, Wally Underwood, WB8TTH, was also a ham and that he passed away in 1976. I explained how my dad got me started in ham radio and that his memories live on every time I fire up the radio. "Wally Underwood? I think I used to know a guy with that name from CB radio days. Please standby."

*"...in 2007
I busted the
bank..."*



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QRX

I'm simply freaking out; here I am talking with someone who may have known my dad. This could be an exciting QSO if I can get some detailed information about what he was like and how Bernie happened to know my dad. The wheels are spinning and my hands are sweating just like my days as a Novice patiently awaiting my turn to send.

Bernie asked me to QRX, he must have a phone call or something. Suddenly my screen again comes alive with text from Bernie.

Yep, I knew it, the name did ring a bell, I remember him when he was on the CB. I went digging and sure enough found the CB QSL card he was using in those days. Rob, please tell me your dad's CB call letters if you can remember them.

(Back in those days you were required to have a CB license to operate and I remember his callsign even to this day hearing him say them over and over.)

I'm so nervous I'm trembling. I remember when I was five years old and living in Linwood, Mich. when my dad was big into CB activity and then moving to Barrington, Mich. again big into CB. He hadn't quite gotten into ham radio yet, but it was his dream. My mind flashes his CB callsign, KHG-6945. My father would say them phonetically, I remember it very clearly to this day: "KING-HENRY-GEORGE-SIXTY-NINE-FORTY-FIVE," over and over as he talked to his friends.

I'm frantically trying to type this to Bernie. In total amazement he responds,

Yep, you got it correct, he used to go by the handle of "Michigan Beamer." I've got his CB QSL card in my hand and will send it to you.

I can't believe what I'm reading on the screen. This guy not only knew my father, but he has something I can only dream of. My father's QSL card—possibly the most valuable thing in my life. I continue to exchange info with Bernie as we talk till the wee hours of the night and band conditions faded away.

The next few days passed as I patiently watched the mail box for the QSL card. Each time the XYL picked up the mail at the end of the driveway I ran to see if I got any QSL cards, there were many, but not the one I'm looking for. This pleased me, but it's that one card from Bernie I want more than anything else. I began

to question the QSO, was it a *Frequency* movie event? Did the QSO really take place? Believe me, I was pretty much freaking out watching for the mailman.

A Time Traveler Calls

Finally, an envelope from Bernie. Opening it I'm so nervous my hands shake. Out comes Bernie's QSL card, proof of our 40-meter QSO. Behind his card is a smaller card. It's maybe 3"x5". On faded yellow paper, the card clearly shows my dad's name, address and CB callsign. In tears I look at the card as wonderful memories replay of the days when my dad and I would chase DX, work my Elmers, or simply ragchew with him as he commuted to or from work.

I called my mother, told her about the card and described it to her. "Yes," she says, "back in those days your dad used a Ditto machine to print out his cards and a rubber stamp to add a design." I'm thinking how time consuming it then was to produce a simple little card as a token of the QSO

As you can imagine, this QSL card, proudly displayed, holds an honored position in my radio room for all visitors to see. My brothers and sister (I come from a large family, the oldest of nine kids) have all put dibs on the card saying, that when I'm gone it's theirs. You can't imagine how valuable this item has

become within our family.

Bernie, you have truly made my ham radio experience very wonderful indeed. I'm honored to have known you and worked you on the air. Most of all I'm very grateful for your devotion to all the QSL card exchanges you've made over the years.

This card stands as proof that every penny we spend on a card, stamp or envelope is truly worth it. This card has proven to me that the exchange of QSL cards is a most important aspect of ham radio. Who knows, maybe some day my descendants will come across a gentleman like yourself and that person will also share those wonderful experiences and *my* card with them.



Wally Underwood,
WB8TTH SK

*"Michigan
Beamer"*



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CONTINUED - QSL CARDS ON PAGE 8

Homebrew Code Keys

Joe Medsker, K8LKC



Single-Lever Paddle on
DuPont™ Corian® Base

Starting out in amateur radio back in the 1950s not much thought was given to the key used to send CW. With practice and experience on the air, it soon became apparent the key was the most important link. The key is as important to a CW transmitter as the modulator in an AM transmitter. A poorly designed and manufactured key hinders your sending greatly. So, why are there so many different designs on the

market? It seems by now all the options would have been tried and either proved or rejected. Believe this, there is still much room for improvement.

We radio amateurs are the last of the CW operators, and I fit right in. There is something romantic

about CW the other modes just don't share. You can't really put your finger on it, nevertheless it is there. I will never give up radio unless CW drops out of the picture.

Being a frustrated machinist, (a true amateur in all respects), what better way to spend radio time when the bands are dead than to build my very own key. I am fortunate to have a small metal lathe and a drill press. The rest of the work was done by hand using files and sandpaper. The knurled locking nuts were made on the lathe and threaded holes tapped by hand. Magnets removed from small speakers make great replacements for springs. They are quite strong and work well in both the attracting and repelling mode. As a retiree you are supposed to have all this free time. You can guess where some of it went.

Keys and paddles share some design parameters, but most important is "feel," i.e., comfortable with quick response. Let's face it. You can't send for long



Homebrew Bug on Wood Base

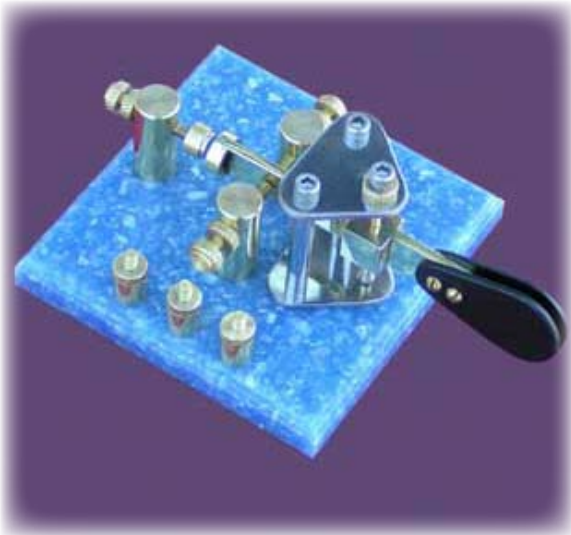


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with a key that feels like you are holding a brick. Over the years at my workbench, many designs have come into being. I have turned out standard straight keys, semi-automatic “bugs,” side-swipers and keyer paddles—both good and bad. It was not



Single-Lever Paddle (magnetic)

only the fun of using the new keys; their design and construction provided great pleasure.

Most of the materials used in their construction came from wherever it could be found and incorporated into the design. Some bases were made from Corian. You know, that counter top material. Corian can be worked much like wood and even turned in a lathe. With fine sandpaper and steel wool it takes on a pleasing satin finish. Other bases were made from hardwood or metal, if a good hunk could be found. Brass makes pretty good contact

material, looks good and machines easy. I found that cold-rolled steel could be polished to resemble chrome. However, I really don't recommend this unless you have an overabundance of patience. Brass or aluminum polishes much easier. Lexan plastic used for windowpanes makes good paddle handles. These are shaped and sanded with medium to fine paper and can be left with a frosted look, or they can be painted.

Most of these keys were made as experiments to try various ideas. The pictures can explain more than a thousand words. I know there must be some out there just looking for inspiration to make their own key. There really is nothing that can give you any more personal satisfaction than operating a key or a paddle you have designed and made with your own hands.

I love to build as much as on the air operating and maybe even a bit more.

In my fifty years plus of amateur radio I have built close to 50 or more different keys and paddles. I really got into it after retirement five years ago. Believe me when I tell you I am not a machinist and have never done any professional machinist work. All you see here is what I have learned on my own. ■



Straight Key with Kick Back



Iambic Paddle (magnetic)



Standard Straight Key



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Don't Wait for APR1L'S QSL Card

Likewise, UFØOL, CLØWN and ID1OT

Rod Newkirk, VA3ZBB/W9BRD



"Via the Burro"
By Dick Sylvan, W9CBT

One traditional rite of spring, and passage toward a new radio amateur's maturity, is to become sharp enough to spot the spoof articles in hamdom's April media. Their appearance, along with the baseball season and bird migration, signals the end of winter. A bit of mathematical trickery and an illusory schematic or two more than once almost became my next workbench project. Just because nobody is using negative frequencies below zero doesn't

necessarily mean they aren't there.

For many seasons, probably by default, *QST*'s April tomfoolery was the domain of Byron Goodman, W1JPE-W1DX. If ARRL's springtime mailbag didn't turn up a gem for him to edit and polish, By would whip one up himself. His office boss, George Grammer, W1DF, wasn't thrilled by the fact that W1DX's funny stuff often drew more approbation than George's hard-wrought serious articles. Byron enjoyed his fun under various pen names as respite from ordinary arduous technical efforts. So did his readers.

Detailed responses from readers was unpredictable, a study by itself. Some wits would turn the tables on W1DX. "I couldn't get the thing to work until I changed your values of R_3 and C_7 . Also, L_4 should be a negative inductance." The construction may have been the amplifier circuit with 250-percent efficiency designed by Larson E. Rapp, WIØU, one of Byron's favored aliases. I wonder if he was ever suckered into running down to the League's cellar lab to test the suggested revisions.

Through the years there have been a few teasy April offerings I was never quite sure of, like a fairly simple circuit to generate single-sideband FM. My junk-box had almost all the needed parts but I never got

around to it. Too bad, it would have doubled the width of 2-meters. Another seductive two-pager was a plan to seed the lower ionosphere with clouds of diaphanous foil loops and dipoles, thus temporarily turning 2-meters into a 20-meter-type DX band. This technique befuddled radars in WW2, you know, called Window.

Another neat brainstorm that still intrigues me was a slick idea to emphatically widen any ham band, thus reducing QRM. You simply feed your receiver's RF amplifier into a harmonic-generating IF strip. Picking off the fifth harmonic of the resultant spectrum, for example, should find all signals five times farther apart. I still may give this a try, although QRM is becoming less and less of a problem in shrinking activity.

Not all comical April cuties are technical. By Goodman's good friend, the "eminent astrologer"

Madam Evelyn Leigh-Falcon, caused a mini-tempest in the *QST* teapot with her "Numerology and Amateur Radio." Assigning specific esoteric attributes to the letters in your callsign, she could analyze your present and forecast your future. Not so far off the wall in days when FCC's labeling came strictly by chance. My own W9BRD reading was an uninspiring fortune cookie. W1DX learned that the Commission received

several requests for callsign changes. Not much fun hamming with an identity that assures you of a short and miserable career. ■

...mini-tempest
in the *QST*
teapot...

Call for Articles

Have a story to share? An experience to relate? Some gear to review? A technical tip to dispense? Feeling didactic or pedantic? Write it up, add a couple of appropriate photographs and send them off to the *K9YA Telegraph*. Hams worldwide will thank you, and so will we.

Here's the place to start:

http://www.k9ya.org/write_for_us.htm



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for his good sportsmanship and long friendship. As a matter of fact, in a troubled period of our life his ham radio came in with my son-in-law—that Barry arranged. As a matter of fact, my daughter thought Barry ought to be the Commander in Chief.

Reference to Senator Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.), K7UGA, and Patrick J. Nugent, Luci Baines Johnson's first husband, then serving in Vietnam.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1933-1945

March 19, 1936: The Two Hundred and Eighty-Fourth Press Conference

The second agency is the C.C.C., and they have been doing extraordinarily good work. In that connection there is a rather good human interest feature with respect to this particular flood which is rather new. The Chief of Staff says that one of the outstanding things that has happened in the last forty-eight hours is the information as to exact situations that has been furnished by the C.C.C. amateur radio sets. For instance, on the dam above Johnstown, after the papers had come out with large headlines as to the dam going out, the Army picked up a message from one of the C.C.C. boys who said, "I am sitting on top of the dam and it has not gone out because I am still sitting on it." (Laughter) "And it is not going to go out." Now, that kind of information is extremely valuable.

Massive 1936 Ohio River Valley flooding.

January 23, 1937: Proclamation 2222 on Public Aid for Red Cross Relief for Flood Sufferers

The Civilian Conservation Corps likewise rendered prompt and valuable service. Work programs were temporarily abandoned in the 193 camps along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, so that the full strength of the personnel could be utilized in flood relief.

Enrollees were also used to guard weakened bridges and the public buildings, direct traffic, act as communications runners after telephone and telegraph lines had failed, man boats for rescue purposes, and operate amateur radio sets.

A contemporary squib in *Radio* magazine, January 1937: "One ham who distinguished himself in New England flood work was himself named *Flood*."

Herbert Clark Hoover, 1929-1933

Appointed by President Warren G. Harding to Secretary of the Department of Commerce (1921-1928).

Hoover was a staunch supporter of the amateur radio service (See: *K9YA Telegraph*, "Zeh Bouck," November 2005, pg. 1 and "In the Beginning," July 2006, pg. 8). His son, Herbert Hoover Jr. (licensed 1915) was, and grandson, Herbert Hoover III, both W6ZH, remain, celebrated and active amateur radio operators. Herbert Hoover III served as president of the ARRL 1962-1966.

As president, Herbert Hoover oversaw the transfer of the Radio Division of the Department of Commerce to the newly created Federal Radio Commission via Executive Order 5892, July 20, 1932.

Will another supportive voice soon issue from the White House? Only time and the vagaries of politics will tell. ■

A Ham in the White House?



GOLDWATER FOR PRESIDENT

That headline emblazoned the cover of the October 1964 issue of 73 magazine above a drawing of the White House topped with a guyed three-element beam capped by Old Glory. Senator Barry Goldwater, K7UGA, faced Lyndon Baines Johnson in the 1964 presidential election.

Although LBJ eventually prevailed, the possibility of a ham as president was not lost on the amateur radio community.

Inside, on page six, Wayne Pierce, K3SUK, depicted the humorous potential of a K7UGA presidency in a three-page spread of 10 cartoons. The lead cartoon revealed the rear end of a Chevrolet Corvair whose bumper sticker read, "Au H₂O K3UIG/K7UGA 64." K3UIG being the callsign the senator used in Washington, D.C. and K7UGA, his callsign at home in Arizona. In another cartoon "President Goldwater" standing before a bank of broadcast microphones says, "However, diplomatic relations will be restored immediately after the QSL card arrives in my office..."



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Robert Beasley, K6BJH, SK



Amateur radio cartoonist Robert Beasley, K6BJH, whose deft drawings sparked many a grin, died February 16, 2008; he was 82. His wife, Helen, survives Bob. According to his autobiography, he was first licensed in southern California in 1953.

Following retirement, Bob fulfilled his lifelong desire to become a cartoonist. His work was featured in *QST*, *Worldradio*, *Electric Radio*, *Spec-Com Journal*, *Radioscan* and *Badger State Smoke Signals*. Collections of his cartoons were published as: *The Best of Beasley* and *The Best of Beasley: K6BJH on Amateur Television*.

Dick Sylvan, W9CBT, discussed his friend in his article, "The Four Cartoonist Amigos," in the September 2006, issue of the *K9YA Telegraph*. That article included a collaborative cartoon depicting the amateur radio cartoonists: Greg Trook, NØUJR; Dick; Bob; and Jeff Murray, K1NSS.

Dick was inspired by Bob's creative efforts and enjoyed many conversations with him by landline and mail. He will be missed.



THE FOUR CARTOONIST AMIGOS

CONTINUED - QSL CARDS FROM PAGE 3

Thanks for the wonderful memories and please don't forget to QSL. ■



RadioAmator.ro

Thank you to Francisc Grünberg, YO4PX, for making this informative page available at *RadioAmator.ro* in the Romanian language:

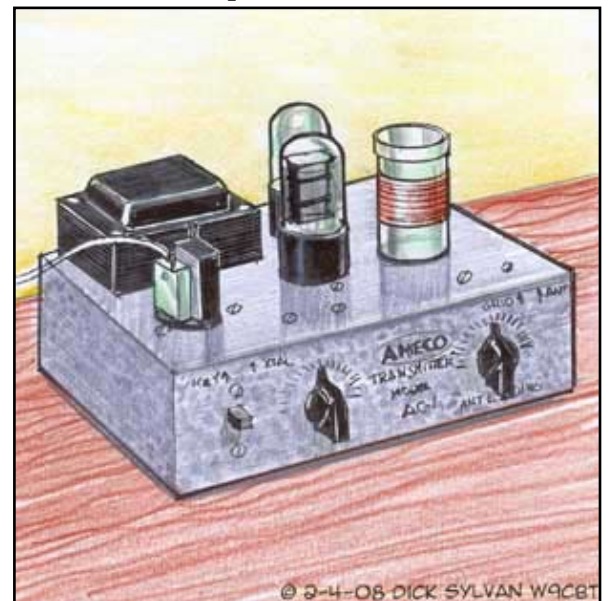
<http://www.radioamator.ro/dxcc/mosaic.php?id=146>

and for his translation of the October 2007 *K9YA Telegraph* article "Disaster in the High Arctic."

<http://www.radioamator.ro/articole/view.php?id=463>

Francisc is the author of the article "The Race with Obstacles" in the January 2008 issue of the *K9YA Telegraph*.

Ham History DICK SYLVAN, W9CBT



AMECO AC-1 XMTR - 15W ON 40 & 80 CW



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