

# K9YA Telegraph

Robert F. Heytow Memorial Radio Club

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## Amateur Radio USSR

Box 88, Moscow - Part III

Philip Cala-Lazar, K9PL

### Communications-USA in the USSR

Soviets' eyeball QSOs with western hams were limited and averaged about 25 per year until the second half of 1964. That year, an American exhibit, Communications-USA, "...afforded a great

opportunity for exchange of information between Soviet and Western hams." The exhibit included a typical American-style ham station equipped with Hallicrafters equipment manned and operated by Lawrence DeMilner, W8NRB/UA1 [now W1TA].

Communications-USA was visited by 500 Soviet hams who were invited "to ask any questions they liked of Mr. De Milner..." He "divided his time between talking to visitors and operating his rig..."; consisting mostly of SSB QSOs with amateurs in the Soviet Union and DX operators. W8NRB visited many Soviet hams' homes, his visits were viewed as a "status symbol among Soviet hams, as did contacts with him on the air..." This was the first time a western ham operated from the Soviet Union.

### Conclusions and Prospects

#### Recapitulation.

1. The Federation of Radio Clubs was concerned with competitive activities setting qualifying norms for titles and diplomas.
2. The State Inspectorate of Electrical Communications' prime responsibility was in the area of granting licenses and in regulating the construction and use of equipment used by amateurs.
3. In cooperation with the above, DOSAAF's greatest importance was the regulation of amateur radio

operation. As a sponsoring organization it developed initiatives and promoted the service/hobby.

DOSAAF provided professional personnel to train new amateurs and to assist already licensed amateurs with station building and operating activities. It was also the main source of amateur gear, parts and QSL cards. With the State Inspectorate they created the "qualifying procedures for licenses."

In all its functions DOSAAF "ensures there will be a trained body of persons capable of operating radio equipment...[it] directs and guides development of amateur activities that best serves the interests... of the Party and government."

The USSR "will probably continue to ...encourage radio amateur activity for purposes useful: 1) to the military services and 2) to the national economy."

Radio contacts "with the West will continue to provide effective propaganda and help to maintain the technical skill of Soviet [hams]... [communications are] limited to contacts revealing technical matters only."

"QSL cards will be censored at least for the immediate future." Concerning censorship,

*CONTINUED - AMATEUR RADIO USSR ON PAGE 6*

*"QSL cards will be censored..."*

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### Inside This Issue...

<i>Amateur Radio USSR - Part III</i>	<i>Page 1</i>
<i>Roadblocks and Obstacles</i>	<i>Page 2</i>
<i>A New Key Project</i>	<i>Page 4</i>
<i>Rose - Part VII</i>	<i>Page 5</i>
<i>Ham Quips</i>	<i>Page 8</i>

# Roadblocks and Obstacles

**Don Keith, N4KC**



Don Keith, N4KC

I write books for a living and have been fortunate enough to have published more than thirty of them so far. I do books on subjects that interest me and hope enough publishers and readers like the same things so that I can continue to do so. That led me to write fiction and non-fiction dealing with college football, NASCAR racing, broadcasting, submarines, biographies and World War II history. Still, it was a while before it occurred to

me to do a book on amateur radio even though I was a ham long before I was a book writer. I had to accidentally stumble upon a theme that I felt had not yet been tackled, one I felt strongly about, and one in which I believed I could actually make some small contribution to the hobby that has been so wonderful for me.

## Shortwaves

*Riding the Shortwaves: Exploring the Magic of Amateur Radio* was aimed at newcomers or those just getting interested in the hobby. But it was also for those who may have been licensed for a while but have not ventured beyond the 2-meter HT, weather-spotting, or whatever else might have attracted them. I also wanted to provide some answers to those ever-present questions such as, “Why fool with that radio stuff when I have Facebook, Twitter and a smart phone?”

Based on its success so far, I think the book touched a nerve and met a need. I cannot tell you how fulfilling that is to an author, no matter the subject.

Later, while perusing one of the ham radio web sites, I saw a heated discussion about the growth of our hobby, whether it was gaining members, and if newcomers would ever be as active and contribute as much to the hobby as we old-timers. The more I read the posts and opinions, the more I realized that

there have always been roadblocks and obstacles to entering the world of amateur radio. Getting started in the hobby has always had its barriers just as do other pastimes.

## Homebrew

There was a point in the hobby’s history when hams had to either build from scratch or convert military surplus gear just to get on the air. Since there were far fewer hams then, there were few mentors—especially in smaller towns and rural areas—so a newly-licensed amateur operator was pretty much on his own, or had to wait for the monthly copy of *QST* to hit the mailbox. There was certainly no Internet for quick reference on radios, antennas, or operating practices.

Some maintain that having to learn Morse code was a serious impediment to people who wanted to become amateurs. I disagree about the “serious”

part, though it was certainly a perception among many that the code was difficult to master. That made it an obstacle, whether it really was one or not.

“...keep our  
hobby vigorous  
and dynamic!”

Still, the hobby continued to grow, just as it does today. We have more licensed amateurs now than ever before and, at least from my perspective, the hobby seems healthy, despite the evolution of technology and all the

other distractions out there. But in talking to many people—including readers of my first book and those who see my articles on various web sites, plus my own ham radio site, [www.n4kc.com](http://www.n4kc.com)—I have come to the conclusion that though the roadblocks may be different nowadays, they are still there. They prevent from joining us many who would enjoy and benefit from the hobby and who would contribute mightily. And just as we did back in the days when Marconi and I were in the same DX pile-ups, we have the obligation to mentor and help those who show a spark of interest, to help them get past those obstructions, be they real or imagined. That will keep our hobby vigorous and dynamic!

I was inspired to do a new pair of amateur radio books. They are squarely aimed at folks who have



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considered becoming a ham but never followed through. And at others who did all the work to get a license, maybe bought a 2-meter HT, but never really went any farther, so far missing out on all our wonderful hobby has to offer. Plus, they are targeted at those who wanted to be able to evangelize and needed some guidelines and ideas to employ in the effort.

We need new blood! We need bright young people (and middle-age and elderly ones, too) to help ham radio evolve and be relevant to each new generation whose needs, perspectives and potential roadblocks can be different from ours.

### Roadblocks

OK, I realize the avocation we all love so much is not everybody's cup of tea. But I also believe that many who never develop into active hams drop by the wayside because of four basic roadblocks...real or perceived. (And, I am NOT including trepidation about passing the license exam. We just need to remind folks that plenty of 7- and 8-year-olds have passed the test.)

Those biggest modern-day obstacles are:

1. Trepidation about putting together a station that would offer a complete and satisfying on-air experience.
2. Absolute terror about having to put up an outside antenna of some kind.
3. Knowing what to expect from the various ham bands and then what to say and do once on the air.
4. The worry they will be lost amid all the jargon developed over the first century of ham radio's existence, and the terror they will be ridiculed for not knowing it all on their first transmission.

### On the Air

In one of the new books, *Get on the Air...NOW!*, my intent is to give practical, realistic advice on getting past each of these stumbling blocks.

One way I tackled obstacle #4—the one about jargon and gobbledygook—was to include as the second half of the book a complete amateur radio dictionary. As I compiled that section, I came up with far more terms than I expected to find—more than 1,400 terms, 1,600 definitions, and hundreds of web links—so I not only made the dictionary

a section in *Get on the Air...NOW!* but published it as a stand-alone book. It is cleverly titled *THE Amateur Radio Dictionary* and is, I am confidently claiming, the most complete ham radio glossary ever compiled. Even long-licensed hams tell me they learn new terms every time they thumb through it. I intend to make it a work in progress with regular updates on both the paper-back and the e-book editions. I blatantly beg for people to give me input on new terms or on better and more understandable definitions so I can maintain that goal.

### Giving Back

At the same time, I ask readers to consider my thoughts on the four specific hurdles I included, but also to offer ideas on others that might keep prospective hams on the sidelines. I also hope these books and discussion on the subject will cause more hams to jump in and become a mentor, advising hesitators on overcoming these and other roadblocks and obstacles.

It can only help our wonderful hobby continue to grow, becoming more vibrant and relevant, as we dive head-foremost into its second century. ■

*Don Keith, N4KC, is a former award-winning broadcaster and now a best-selling author. He was first licensed in 1961 at the age of 13. His amateur radio web site is [www.n4kc.com](http://www.n4kc.com) and his professional site is [www.donkeith.com](http://www.donkeith.com).*



*"Get on the air...NOW!"*

### K9YA Telegraph Algorithm

Like what you're reading in this month's *K9YA Telegraph*? If so, you're in good company, as amateur radio operators in more than 100 countries agree with you. Know what else? Hams just like you write the *K9YA Telegraph*.

Evidenced by your feedback we know we've hit on a winning formula:

**YOU + *K9YA Telegraph* = A Great Read**

But without your side of the equation, it just doesn't add up.

[http://www.k9ya.org/write\\_for\\_us.htm](http://www.k9ya.org/write_for_us.htm)



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# A New Key Project

Paul W. Ross, W3FIS



This all got started when I looked at my venerable and well-worn World War II J-38 key I have been using, and have had since childhood (bought war surplus for \$1.00!). I stripped it down, repainted the base, and polished the brass parts. Thinking a bit, it might just be time to think about getting another straight key. One can never have enough keys. After a discussion with the XYL and about having enough shoes, she said, “You

have a birthday coming up, what would you like?” No question about it, time for a new key. You don’t have to ask me twice!

You can spend a *lot* on money on telegraph keys! Some years back I assembled a really nice paddle kit from American Morse Equipment, again not wanting to spend a ton of money on a key. The paddle has worked great, and with my recent attempt to get back into CW, I thought they might have something of interest for a straight key.

Off goes an order for their KK1-B straight key kit. In a few days, a rather small and bulky package arrives, which when I identified it, the XYL quickly grabbed and said, “Not until you birthday,” which was some weeks off. In any event, I can download the instruction manual, print it out, and see what I am getting into.

Well, *finally*, my birthday arrives, and that evening I opened the package. The manufacturer strongly suggests you empty the parts (lots of tiny screws and washers, etc.) into a container, as the little parts have been known to grow legs, hop off the work table, and hide in the carpet. Crawling around on the floor with a flashlight tends to get the family dog upset. Also, at my age, getting back up is nothing you want to observe.

A trip to the kitchen to search for a container is in order. I found one of those you keep leftovers in just right, and it had a top to trap parts in case I wanted to take a break during the key’s assembly.

The instructions I downloaded said I would have to remove a couple of small burrs from the clevis on the base, either with a small file, or a knife. I opted for the knife, as I did not want to mess up the fairly small clearance between the bar and the clevis. Two swipes with my jackknife, and that problem was resolved. The fit of the operating lever in the clevis was great. Now on to serious assembly.

The instructions were quite complete, and well illustrated. Since there are a number of similar parts: #4-40 screws and thumbscrews of different lengths, a careful examination of the illustrations was immensely useful.

The original design of the key had been nicely modified to now include a knob instead of just a piece of Lucite for the paddle. If there hadn’t been one (as in earlier production runs), I would have made a trip to the big box hardware store to see what they had.

Everything went together smoothly. Final assembly work included attaching a 3.5 mm mono cable scrounged from the junk box. The end was soldered to some solder tabs that fit under the connector thumbscrews. The key is pretty small, and with rough use that cable connection could be problematical. Another trip, this time to a local craft store for a nice piece of wood and a small can of spray enamel. I needed to visit the hardware store for some more vinyl feet and a cable clamp.

The final product works great! With the wooden base and vinyl feet it doesn’t drift around the desk. The touch is fairly light—the spring tension can be adjusted for a heavier touch if you wish. The contact spacing can be adjusted to your taste. I have found that two layers of a common business card or 3” x 5” index card make a perfect “feeler” gauge to set the contact spacing.

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“...what would you like?”



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CONTINUED - A NEW KEY PROJECT ON PAGE 8

Scott B. Laughlin, N7NET

Charlie found Rose an intriguing young woman. She was as fresh as a spring morning. Her interest in amateur radio was questionable, except for the geography the QSLs offered.

He was older than Rose. He wasn't sure how her father felt about that age difference, but he suspected his asking for a date would not be well received, not yet anyway. He would have to use caution.

College was her immediate future. Rose's father found a black 1940 Ford coupe and brought it to Charlie's shop for inspection. After it was deemed a sound automobile he bought it for her, calling it her college car.

# # #

Autumn gave way to winter. During those few months he'd managed to take Rose to three movies at the Fisk Theater on the Butler Square. In a slight way, her perfume caused Charlie to recall letters he received from a Colorado girl he'd met while in radio school. It was a long ways from Denver to his duty station in Iceland and the faint fragrance of civilization was always welcome. The letters continued for a few months, and then the space between them gradually expanded until they stopped altogether. There had been nothing between them, so it didn't really matter. He wished her well.

Rose, however, was different. She was someone with whom he could build a future.

One cold and snowy morning, hours before daylight, the telephone brought Charlie out of a sound sleep. The caller was a long haul trucker at a pay phone north of town on US 71. One of the wheels on the drive axle had sheared the lug nuts and dropped his truck onto the highway. His load was fresh produce that could freeze if he didn't reach Kansas City by morning. Charlie wasn't equipped for heavy work, and road service was beyond his capability. However, he got dressed and drove out to see if there was something he could do.

The driver had already set out his flares and had retrieved his wheel and tire from an adjacent field. If the

truck had not been blocking the northbound lane, Charlie would have turned down the job. But it was a potential disaster. Returning to the shop he loaded tools, jacks, blocks, and in his father's inventory, he found the correct wheel studs and nuts for the job.

It was difficult, working by lantern light. Lying on his back in the snow had soaked him to the skin. By the time the trucker was ready to roll, Charlie was wet and chilled through.

Later that morning he developed a nasty cough. Artie took over the shop while he went to see his doctor. He was going into pneumonia, his doctor said, and admitted him to the hospital.

Fortunately, the pneumonia was caught in the early stages, and he was quickly on the mend. After he was no longer contagious Rose drove to school each day and then came by the hospital to check on him. During her third visit he suggested they step outside for some fresh air.

"You can do that?" she asked.

"Of course, they don't care. Wait for me while I get my clothes."

Minutes later they were in the elevator and headed for the lobby. The snow had been cleared from the sidewalk. Though a frigid wind blew from the northwest, they strolled around the perimeter of the hospital grounds for a quarter-hour. When it was time for Rose to head home Charlie returned to the hospital. As he stepped into the lobby a lady at the main desk asked if there was anything she could do for him.

"Are you here to visit someone?"



*"Are you here to visit someone?"*



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CONTINUED - ROSE ON PAGE 8

*RADIO* declared: *It is a secret to no one that hostile propaganda in attacking our Marxist-Leninist ideology unremittingly conducts provocational subversive works, and stops at nothing in its attempts to deprave the soul and consciousness of the Soviet people. It seeks to exploit the ether, and not infrequently even the amateur bands*



*of radio for dissemination of its base fabrications; in the guise of dispatches into our country postcards of religious content, foul smelling and clearly hostile (to us) advertising, etc. That is why we must do all in order to toughen our radio sportsmen ideologically, to increase their vigilance, to develop their class consciousness, their feeling of patriotic pride and their readiness to rebuff any onslaught of bourgeois ideology.*

### Soviet Amateur Radio-1965

#### Political challenges to Soviet amateur radio.

*The obvious problem of DOSAAF in regulating amateur radio activity in the Soviet Union is that characteristic of any control mechanism in a totalitarian political system. How far should undesired innovation be curtailed? Unfortunately, the dividing line between desirable innovation and politically dangerous innovation is rarely very sharp, given the multiplicity of variable factors influencing development. This difficulty makes conclusions and predictions even more complicated for the Western observer. He must both determine the rational course of action and the probable Soviet course of action. These reservations assumed, we may proceed to make certain tentative conclusions which should facilitate judgment as to the future of radio amateur activity in the USSR.*

Competition in the USSR continued to be important, especially activities “which strengthen experience in militarily important situations.”

Satellite tracking will continue, “in isolation from other hams of the world, or in conjunction with East European hams.”

Emphasis on VHF/UHF will increase, as will SSB operation. Growth of SSB was foreseen to reduce crowding on the phone bands.

Increased amateur TV experimentation, as well as continued amateur involvement “in improving radio and electronics equipment.”

Like hams worldwide, “Soviet hams have shown a tendency to make their equipment smaller, more compact, and in general more suitable to mobile communications facilities.”

### Recent Criticisms of Soviet Radio Amateur Activity

*RADIO* articles critical of the state of Soviet amateur radio activity during the period 1963-1964, included these observations.

1. Using foreign names like Bob and Jack rather than “good old Russian names Yurii, Eugenii, and Valentina.”
2. “Recording and broadcasting ‘croaking’ music over the air...”
3. Rural amateur club activity “lagging.”
4. “Poor organizational work in recruiting young people to amateur radio.”
5. “More supervision by clubs over radio amateurs [is needed].”
6. Slow growth of amateur clubs in some oblasts and a decline in others.

7. Radio “hooliganism”—a reflection of hooliganism [“a crime against society”] in the greater society leaking into amateur radio.

Comment in *RADIO* from a Donbas coal miner in the Ukrainian SSR: “Radio hooligans are poisoning our lives. When you turn on the radio, you often get disgusting music and obscene

language. Radio hooligans spoil our enjoyment, corrupt our youth, and make it impossible for children to listen to broadcasts.”

Another commenter wrote: *These unscrupulous people have become a nightmare for a great number of TV fans. The moment a hooligan goes on the air, a family watching the TV can consider the evening ruined. The image on the screen is distorted beyond recognition, and there is nothing left to do but turn off the set.*

### Appendix 1

Ministry of Communications, USSR State Inspectorate of Electro-Communication

*On the Order of Registration and Use of Amateur Transmitting-Receiving Radio Stations of Individual and Collective Use*

“Radio  
‘hooliganism’”



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The USSR's definition of individual and collective (club) amateur radio stations resembled its American counterpart apart from the inclusion of the term "sportswork."

The operator of a station that is inactive for more than three, but less than six months "must inform the local State Inspectorate of Electro-Communications no later than three days after work has ceased, and must also send a notification of the resumption of radio work no later than five days before the renewal of operations." If a station remains inactive for more than six months, the owner must inform the local State Inspectorate within three days and return the station license. No wonder Soviet hams seemed omnipresent on the HF bands.

### Fees

1. Registration: 3 rubles [\$3.33]
2. Adjustment: 5 rubles [\$5.55]
3. Operating: 36 rubles per year [\$39.96]

### Appendix 2

Decree of the Russian Republic Soviet on Liability for the Illegal Construction and Use of Radio Transmitters

Documents required at "every functioning radio station."

1. Permit for operation of a radio station
2. Apparatus journals of the prescribed form
3. A copy of the instructions on registration procedure and the operation of amateur radio stations

And, at collective (club) stations

4. Schedule of the times operators are on duty
5. Rules for technical safety and fire prevention
6. Schedule of communications with regular correspondents, if such exists

In the event of an emergency amateur stations may "relay [the] broadcasts of...distress signals (SOS). DOSAAF may use club stations for the transmission of bulletins [QSTs] and "radio roll calls (*pereklichka*)."

### Appendix 3

Individual and club stations must keep "instrument journal[s]", i.e., station logs, that include the start and end times of "the work of the session of

the amateur radio station on a broadcast with an indication of the frequency." "[T]he whole text received and a short summary of the text sent must be included in the instrument journal." This onerous rule was perhaps another reason for the brevity of Soviet hams' QSOs. As in then current US regulations, all transmissions, whether they resulted in a contact or not, had to be recorded in the station log.

Minimum age of amateur radio station operators: private station, 18 years, HF; private and club, 16 years, UHF only; and club station only, SWLs, 14 years. SWLs at age 12 could work UHF at club stations provided they were "registered with the Union Republic Committee of DOSAAF."

Violation of amateur regulations resulted in:

1. A warning
2. Prohibition of the use of one or another wave length or operating mode
3. A fine
4. Cessation of operating activities

*The fines levied on workers, white collar workers, and students may not exceed 25 per cent of their monthly salary or stipend.*

Fines up to 100 rubles [\$111] were imposed at the government level.

Fines over that amount were imposed by the State Inspectorate of Electro-Communications.

### Epilog

This look back at amateur radio in the USSR revealed a heavily regulated radio service with strict government oversight and operated under stringent operating protocols. On the other hand, the state, in the guise of DOSAAF, provided training throughout the Soviet licensing structure, from SWL to amateur radio Class 1. In addition, thanks to DOSAAF club stations (in a nation of apartment dwellers), hams and SWLs could access the facilities and gear to get on the air and participate in national and international contests.



*"...radio roll calls (pereklichka)."*



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CONTINUED - AMATEUR RADIO USSR ON PAGE 8

During this same period the US amateur radio service, too, was heavily regulated in every aspect from licensing, to operating and record keeping. However, the rules and regulations governing American hams did not approach the draconian levels faced by their Soviet counterparts. Hams in the US, for most of their century-long history, have been the trusted beneficiaries of government policies that rewarded their many accomplishments, endeavors and contributions to the nation. ■

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### Ham Quips

DICK SYLVAN, W9CBT



FOREVER DESIGNING DISTINCTIVE AND USEFUL HAM RADIO PRODUCTS--DICK, W9CBT, INTRODUCES HIS NEW, AWARD WINNING COMBINATION KEYSER AND CANOE PADDLE!

The key design with the attached base lends itself well to the European style of keying—keep your wrist off the desk by moving the key close to the edge and let your arm do the work instead of your wrist. This is *much* less tiring, and will help to avoid “glass fist” from repeated keying. If you have ever seen replicas of the early spark keys, “brass pounding” takes on an altogether different meaning! ■

CONTINUED - ROSE FROM PAGE 5

“No, it’s just pretty cold outside and I thought I might step in here to warm up,” Charlie replied.

She nodded and returned to her duties. All was quiet until the day nurse assigned to Charlie’s floor stepped from the elevator.

“What are you doing out of bed?” she growled.

“You’re Charlie McAntire, aren’t you?” asked the lady at the desk.

“Yes, I am.”

“Come with me, Mr. McAntire,” the nurse demanded, taking Charlie by the arm and heading for the elevator. ■

### NAQCC Anniversary

The North American QRP CW Club (NAQCC) will be celebrating its 11th anniversary the week of October 12-18 with some fun on-air activities. Special event stations N1A, N2A, N3A... NØA will be on the air from all over the United States, and special certificates and QSL cards will be available for these contacts. The stations will be operating CW at QRP power levels and will be announced on our special spotting page ([http://www.naqcc.info/spot\\_schedule.php](http://www.naqcc.info/spot_schedule.php)) in almost real-time. (You do not need to be QRP but we encourage you to give it a try.)

On Tuesday evening of that week (0030-0230Z Oct 13) we will have our usual monthly sprint but with the bonus that all NAQCC members who participate will be automatically entered into a drawing for some great prizes. More detailed information about our anniversary celebration can be found in our September newsletter at: [http://www.naqcc.info/newsletter\\_207.pdf](http://www.naqcc.info/newsletter_207.pdf).

Information about the NAQCC, including a membership application (it’s free), can be found at: <http://www.naqcc.info/>



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