



# Dots & Dashes

What

Hath

God

Wrought

The Official Publication of the Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

Vol. 37, Issue No. 2 • Spring 2011

## A KID'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE RUTLAND RAILROAD

*Readers, this story was written for Dots & Dashes by MTC member Larry Marnes of Mooers, NY. Read Larry's brief introductory letter to the editor dated December 12th. This story emphasizes the importance of your role as mentors and as telegraph era interpreters. ~Editor Jim*

I began my association with the Rutland Railway in 1951 when I was just five years old. For as long as I could remember, I had always been a railroad fan, but the first visit to the Mooers station on my own was about age ten. Any visits prior to that were with my grandfather, Howard Blair, who owned and operated the Square Deal Garage in Mooers, where he sold Sunoco gasoline and did automobile repair work. I recall many happy trips to the station with my grandfather in his old 1948 Ford F-1 pickup truck.

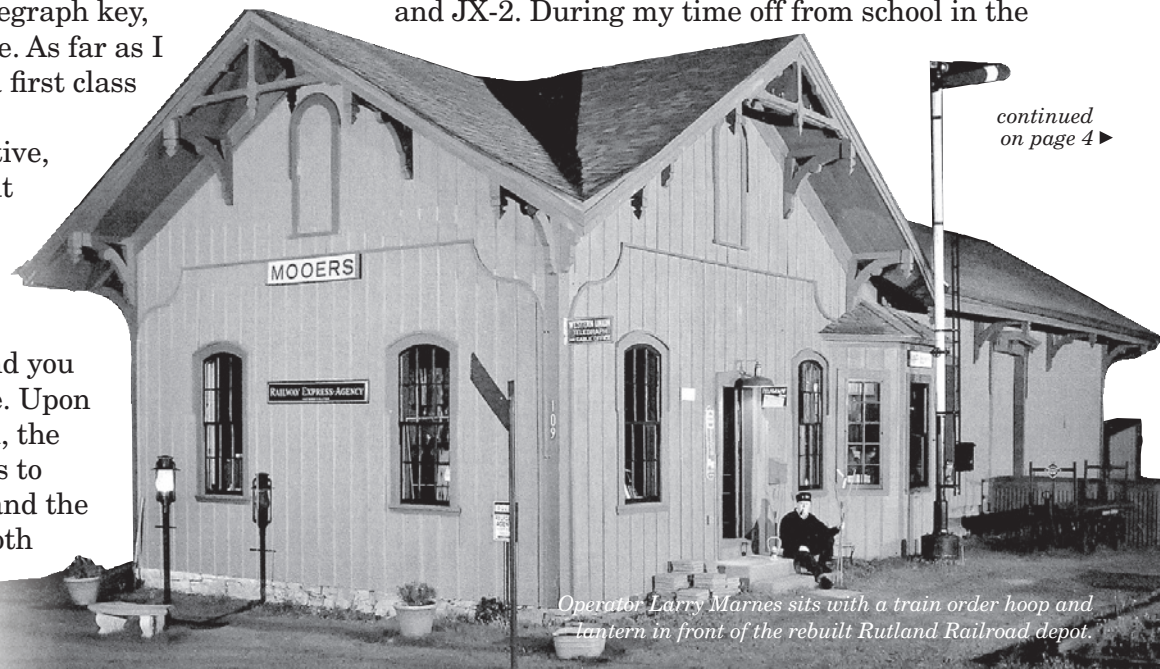
It was at that time, age ten, when I met Clement N. Messier, the agent-telegrapher, who had held the Mooers agency job or nearly fourteen years. Clem was very well known and respected in the community. He was friendly and outgoing. He used to let me play with the telegraph key, plugged in on the side wire. As far as I was concerned, that was a first class experience.

From a sensory perspective, there was something about the Mooers station that seemed to grab my heart and soul in a powerful way. The telegraph was always clattering away and you could hear it, even outside. Upon entering the waiting room, the building seemed enormous to me with its high ceilings and the resonance it afforded to both voice and telegraph.

There was also the smell at the station, a heavenly confection of soft coal, cigarette, cigar, and pipe smoke, with a dash of kerosene thrown in. The combination of these ingredients is what I today refer to as "essence of depot." I am pleased to report that the building still has this aroma to this day.

Turning ten years old seemed to be the magic evolution in my railroad experience. About that time in my life, I was allowed to venture out on my trusty Columbia bike. No longer did I have to stay on our street; I now gained my freedom to roam the village at will. Since I was in love with the Rutland Railway, the station became my most regular destination.

Those were the days of four trains daily: the locals, AM-1 and MA-2 and the through freights XJ-1 and JX-2. During my time off from school in the



*continued  
on page 4*

*Operator Larry Marnes sits with a train order hoop and lantern in front of the rebuilt Rutland Railroad depot.*



# Sidewire

Comments from the  
Editor of Dots & Dashes

By Jim Wilson



In his previous "President's Line" column, MTC International President Jim Wades highly recommended that each MTC chapter become connected to the telegraph HUB, and that each chapter plan a Morse Day gathering.

My own "WA" chapter responded to Jim's challenge by getting a sounder connected to the HUB! MTC member, Cliff Hine, was extremely helpful in helping me establish a WA chapter HUB connection, which is now located in my basement.

Also, thanks to Jim Wade's urging, my WA chapter now plans a Morse Day celebration on Saturday, May 30th. Without a gentle push from Jim Wades and with assistance from Cliff Hines, we would not have been successful.

I hope your chapters were equally successful in getting on the HUB and planning a Morse Day celebration. Please share the stories about your gatherings.

On another note of success, my local ham radio club, the Albemarle Amateur Radio Club, was judged by the Dayton Hamvention Association during mid February to be the Amateur Radio Club of the Year for the entire United States. Since many of our newer MTC members are licensed ham operators, this will be of interest to you. Because I wrote the application that secured this national honor, I feel extra proud.

Remember that Civil War 150th year sesquicentennial celebrations kick off this summer. This means that telegraph demos will be extra popular during 2011. You and your telegraph skills will especially be needed.

Please ask your chapter presidents how you can participate. You can serve as a one man show, or you can be part of a group. Don't hide your light under a bushel. Show the world the sound and the fury of a telegraph sounder in action!

# President's Line



Jim Wades, President  
Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

*"I don't get no respect"*

The comedian Rodney Dangerfield was famous for complaining that he didn't get any respect. As a matter of fact, he built a multi-million dollar career around this one concept. It's nice work if you can get it!

I think about this famous comedic line on occasion when I encounter some rail fans and railroad history organizations, which place tremendous emphasis on locomotives or rolling stock to the exclusion of other aspects of railroad history. There are rail fans that can recite from memory the dates and ownership history of numerous locomotives including some that are of surprisingly "garden variety" vintage. Yet, they know little about other aspects of the industry.

One might say that there are numerous aspects of railroad history that "don't get any respect." This includes the regulatory, economic, labor, and technical history of the industry, including, of course, telegraphy.

The tendency to focus on a narrow area of history is not limited to rail fans and railroad

*continued on next page ▶*

# Dots & Dashes

The official publication of

**The Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.**

**Jim Wilson - Editor, Dots and Dashes**

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museums. One sees a similar tendency in other fields. Some years ago, a friend of mine served on the board of a well known air museum. We often discussed his concern that many of the board members wanted to fly the planes at the expense of investing in better museum facilities and improved security and preservation of artifacts. Unfortunately, he was proven correct several years later when the museum caught fire, destroying a significant portion of the collection. In retrospect, one has to ask if the myopic view of military aircraft history was ultimately beneficial to future generations.

As an association of individuals with an interest in the history and traditions of telegraphy, we have a wonderful opportunity to educate the public about the important, but often overlooked roll played by the telegraph in the development of not just the rail industry, but all phases of our modern economy. This summer, our members will once again be conducting numerous telegraph demonstrations at events ranging from the Dayton "Hamvention" to numerous Civil War re-enactments. One need not be a qualified telegraph operator to assist with such events. There are numerous ways to tell the story of the telegraph by displaying instruments, assisting at demonstrations, or by applying modern tools such as "Morse KOB" to interactive exhibits.

Don't be afraid to get out there and tell the story of telegraphy! Let's do our part to expand the knowledge of those who might focus on only a narrow and limited part of our nation's industrial history.

### New Directors

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome two new members of the MTC Board of Directors. We are honored to have serving on our board Roland Normandeau and Robert Foote.

Roland learned telegraphy in 1949 at "SY" (Sudbury) office on the Canadian Pacific. He served as a Morse operator in Chapleau and Terrace Bay, Ontario. He also served as T&R Chief at Sudbury, Chapleau and White River in the mid 1950s. Eventually, he moved to Bell Canada, retiring as a Section Manager in 1990.

Bob Foote of Nova Scotia worked for Canadian National and was assigned at CN headquarters in Montreal for ten years. He is very active in MTC and is well known in the telegraph fraternity throughout the Maritime Provinces and Quebec.

In the coming months, we plan to make additional

*continued on the bottom of page 11 ►*

► This ad runs routinely in the *World Radio News*:

## Morse Telegraph Club

### Landline Morse is Alive and well!

"Dots and Dashes" newsletter

The Ace Holman national telegraph office & hub

Internet Telegraphy Railroad Telegraphy

Morse Telegraph demonstration

Learn more about the history of the telegraph or simply enjoy using American Morse Code and authentic telegraph equipment.

[www.morsetelegraphclub.org](http://www.morsetelegraphclub.org)

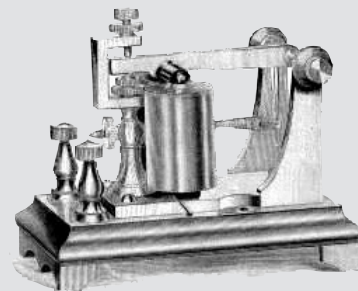
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The next issue of Dots & Dashes is scheduled for publication on June 30<sup>th</sup>, with submission deadline three weeks prior to that date.

*Rutland Railroad, continued from the front page*

summer, I often managed to see them all, except for JX-2, which usually came through Mooers around 3:00 o'clock in the morning.

Even though I didn't see JX-2, I can remember waking at the sound of the whistle and listening to her rumble through town. Of course, I got to know the local crew well and became a fast friend of the estimable Ellis Keeler Stone (Pewee), the most competent railroad man I ever knew. He was also the most consummate practical joker. In those days, the local train crew consisted of Henry Sharian, engineer, Romeo Blair, fireman, Bob Dragon, head brakeman, Joe Loffler, flagman, and Pewee Stone, conductor.

The Rutland was doing a vigorous freight business at Mooers during that time. Pewee used to say that the team track at Mooers was probably the highest revenue producing siding on the entire Ogdensburgh Sub. The reason for this was that the track served the GLF feed store, Hardee Farms of Sherrington, Quebec - who received reefers loaded with produce from Texas, Dragoon's Farm Equipment - who received carloads of farm machinery, and Mooers Concrete Products - who received carloads of Portland cement.

All this traffic was spotted at various places on one team track. As you can imagine, when a customer received freight cars or had empties for pickup, this often resulted in having to pull the whole track and then re-spot everything, which made for quite a lot of shifting and thus some good train watching for me. Also, Wednesdays were "way car" days, so AM-1 always stopped to unload shipments in the station's attached freight house.

When I wasn't watching the locals switching, I always had plenty of questions for telegrapher, Clem. He was always happy to answer my questions. I was fascinated with Morse code. Clem told me that it was something I could learn if I really wanted to. He began teaching me and I was delighted when I finally began picking up a few real words off the wire. I kept copying the wire, not always getting all of it, but found that it gradually began to make sense.

I found sending easier than copying, so I became a good clear text sender with Clem's help. Then one day Clem told me, "If someone can't copy your sending, then it's because they don't really know Morse. Your sending is excellent." This was wonderful praise from an accomplished telegrapher! Clem's praise made me work harder, because I really wanted to be a part of that fraternity. I still retain some degree of Morse skill and am glad that I have not forgotten what I worked so hard to achieve.

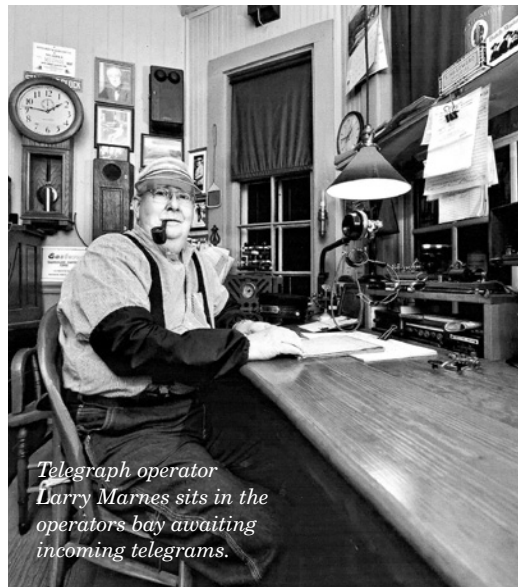
Clem could see that I was extremely interested in everything pertaining to the railroad. So he made sure that I also got some training on the Book of Rules, station accounting, car checking, seal

records, OSing trains and the use of block sheets, clearance cards and train orders. Clem let me fill out some of the forms and even had me make calls to LCL customers to notify them that their parcels had arrived. Clem and I also worked together on such mundane tasks as floor sweeping and window washing and other necessities to keep "Our Station" in shape and presentable. For me, the work was fun. If I could give up the job I have presently in favor of becoming a station agent, I would do so in a heartbeat. But, sadly the local agents and their

railroad jobs are all gone.

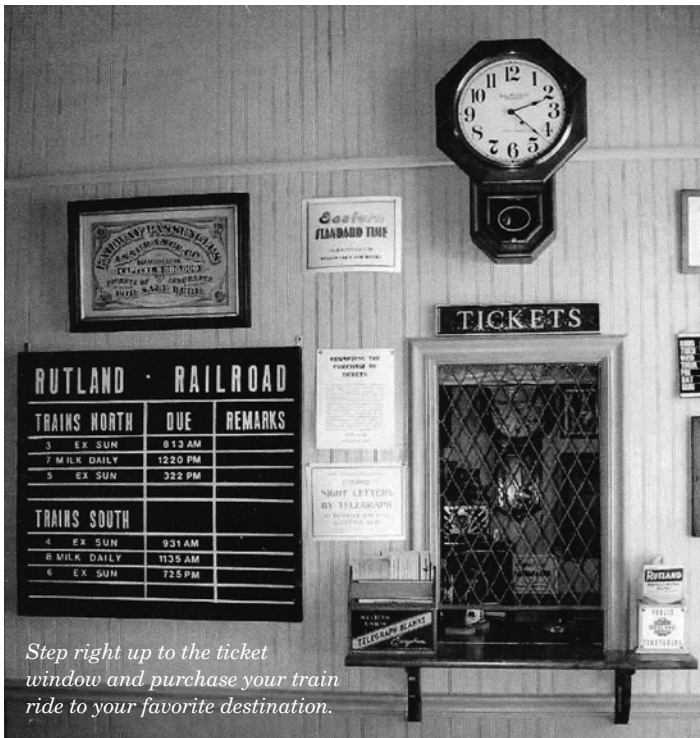
After his fourteen years in Mooers, Clem bid successfully on the Rouses Point agency. Then Clem's former Mooers job was filled by Francis McArdle, who had been a longtime occupant of the agency at Madrid. Frank had worked for many agencies on the Ogdensburgh Sub and his motivation for bidding on Mooers was that he and his wife had several relatives in the Altona area. They looked at this as a good chance to get back to family after a long time away.

I was fortunate that "Mac" took to me immediately and that I was allowed to carry on with my station "duties" interrupted. We got along famously. Mac used to let me plug in on the side wire and visit in Morse with my old friend, Clem at Rouses Point during the noon hour. I enjoyed a great friendship with Mac and I would like to think that I was of some genuine assistance to him during



*Telegraph operator Larry Marnes sits in the operators bay awaiting incoming telegrams.*

*continued on the next page ►*



*Step right up to the ticket window and purchase your train ride to your favorite destination.*

the last years of the railroad.

All too soon, the 1960's arrived and all too soon came the demise of the Rutland Railroad. I felt that an essential part of my life had been destroyed. Mac took his pension, as did Clem and a host of the old guard. I maintained my friendships with both of them, but I felt that none of us were ever the same.

All through the 1960's, I continued to pass by the old station and I became saddened to see the building become a study in decay and neglect. Yes, there were private owners after the Rutland, but all they did was try to modify the interior for their own purposes, totally neglecting the exterior. The last owner, a local excavation contractor, had the intention of making it into an office and equipment storage yard for his business, but he never did anything with it. The bay window rotted, the roof had multiple leaks, many of the windows were broken, and brush was taking over the site.

It seemed to me that, if the building was going to survive, it would have to be under the stewardship of a new owner. The more I thought about it, I realized the new owner had to be ME. The last owner, a schoolmate of mine, was approachable. So one day I asked him if he was going to really do anything with the building, and if not, would he consider selling it. He responded that he was fed-up with paying taxes on it and he had abandoned his plans for the site. So we basically made the deal then and there. In the spring of 2003, I was deeded ownership of the old station.

Good friend, Chris Trombley, and I began work in earnest, clearing up the property and emptying the building of trash. After a couple of good bonfires, fueled by the debris, I got in a contract with a local roofing contractor. He installed 110 sheets of plywood on the roof and new slate-grey architectural shingles.

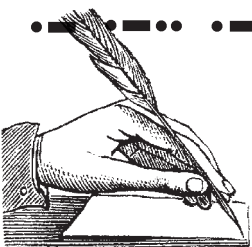
Having sealed up the building, Chris and I spent many days sweeping out water. We finally dried the station out with a couple of large box fans. At one time we had a roofing crew, exterior painters, plus Chris and I all working at the same time. We had to rebuild partitions, replace window glass, rebuild the operators bay and telegraph desk, replace and repair interior wood trim plus many fine details too numerous to mention. Probably the worst jobs were tearing out and replacing warped flooring and tearing down the old chimney, which was full of soot all the way up to the flue hole. The next most difficult job was moving all the furnishings from my home garage over to the station, and then getting everything situated inside.

Fast forward to 2008: After spending far too much money and countless hours, we finally had the station restored to the way it looked when I used to hang out there as a kid. On a technical note for those interested, the main exterior colors came from True Value Hardware. The siding is painted Yorktown Green and the dark green trim is called Pineview. Window sashes are painted black. These are latex acrylic flat paints. The interior walls are a yellow called Pinehurst and the interior trim is best described as a brown-orange color called Magoo. These color choices are extremely close to the original color scheme. They were obtained by mixing paints to match core samples taken of the original paint.

*continued on the bottom of page 9 ►*



*Seen here is the operator's bay at the reconstructed Rutland Railroad Company depot.*



# Letters to the Editor

## December 12th

---

I have been a MTC member for a long time and served as Secretary-Treasurer for the old Joseph Henry "AB" Chapter for several years.

Now retired, I have been working on the restoration of the old Rutland Railway station in my home town of Moores, New York. The place was originally built in 1865. It was operational until the Rutland was abandoned in 1961.

I have prepared an article about the station, and include some pictures which I hope you be able to share with readers of *Dots & Dashes*.

*Larry E. Marnes  
Moores, NY*

*Read Larry's story and view his pictures beginning on the front page.*

## December 20th

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We the Scouts of Troop #507 would like to take this opportunity to tell you about the dedication and commitment that one of your members has shown our troop in the pursuit of learning Morse telegraphy for the Signaling Merit Badge. Mr. William McFarland has been teaching 23 Boy Scouts Morse telegraphy for the past several months.

While our Merit Badge Counselor (Assistant Scout Master, Mr. Doug Mactye) got us through several steps in the pursuit of the Signaling Merit Badge, we could not have earned the badge without Mr. McFarland's vast knowledge and expertise as an operator and instructor. He took the time out of his own schedule to meet at our church on Monday night for several weeks, which truly shows his level of character and commitment.

We are happy to report that all 23 scouts have now passed their final tests and will be receiving the Signaling Merit Badge. This could not have been done without him!

If there is anything you need from Troop #507 in regards to dates or instruction times for Mr. McFarland's service to this Troop, please do not hesitate to ask. Please send him our warm regards for his expert tutelage.

*Troop #507  
Lake Mary, Florida*

## December 26th

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I'd be delighted to host a gathering at the Boyce Depot agent's office, which was "DK." Between now and then, I'd like to create a MorseKOB interface card for the local circuit. I haven't had the time or the technical expertise to make the card, but am willing to buy the components to assemble it. I can also set up a computer with Internet access inconspicuously in the agent's office under the operator's desk.

I scanned a 1932 photo of the agent's office, attached, with Sylvester M. Lane seated. There is enough detail visible that I want to rearrange the instruments on the operator's desk as shown in the photograph.

"Hubie" wired a key and sounder, so we will plan on Morse Day at Boyce. Meanwhile, best wishes for a good start to 2011.

*Sincerely,  
Dr. Frank R. Scheer  
Curator of the Railway Mail Service Library,  
Inc. 117 East Main Street in Boyce, VA 22620*

*Readers, the WA Chapter plans Morse Day picnic at Boyce on April 30th. "Hubie" is the nickname for Hubert Jewell, President of the Washington-Baltimore (WA) Chapter.*

## January 17th

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I just received my copy of the winter issue of *Dots & Dashes* and especially enjoyed the cover story about the Civil War. I have a wonderful book about the Civil War titled, *The Telegraph Goes to War*, by Donald Markle. The book describes Lincoln's personal telegrapher operator.

I am a retired Boomer Operator; worked on the NP, SP&S, ORE Electric, ORE Trunk, and more. Being a telegraph operator was like a paid vacation!

My favorite job was third trick. My *Fire, & Snow at the Lester Depot* story is in the original *Rail Tales* book which was published in 1995. While at Lester, I often rode the freights from Lester. I learned a lot about air brakes and train handling. I'm looking forward to the next issue of *Dots & Dashes*.

*73,  
Doug Hubert  
Seattle, Washington*

*continued on next page ►*

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## January 21st

Hey Jim, OM, "Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow," plus "Kids be sure and drink your Ovaltine," plus "When it rains it pours." These are the secret coded messages from the past three issues of *Dots & Dashes*. Wow, Morse code is all over the place; I love it!

*William Eggelston  
AT Ollie Blackburn Chapter*

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## January 28th

I read with interest, "A Break from Prison," the article in the winter 2010-11 issue of *Dots & Dashes*, written by Lloyd Trainor. I worked with Lloyd Trainor in Sherridon, Manitoba around 1950. It would be nice to contact him if it is permissible for you to give me his location.

*Lorne Graham  
Kelowna, BC*

*As requested, I sent Lorne the address and telephone number for his former co-worker friend. ~Editor Jim*

---

## January 30th

Please note that I was an operator on the Canadian Pacific Railway from August 21, 1951 until July, 1959. As a result of being a telegrapher in the Royal Canadian Navy, it was not necessary for me to learn the railway code. As a result, I learned no railway office or train order procedures.

This story is sent to readers of *Dots & Dashes* to describe the lack of training, no questions asked by the chief of my capabilities, and to describe the tough times I had on my initiation to this job.

*Jack G. Harris  
Saskatoon, SK, Canada*

*Readers, Jack's story begins on page 14*

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## January 31st

This letter, sadly, is to advise you of Percy's passing in his 90th year. (See Silent Keys, Percy Galvin). I also wanted to let you know that Percy really enjoyed reading *Dots & Dashes*, and looked forward to every issue. He especially enjoyed the stories, many humorous. I enjoyed them too. He would have liked Bill Rolston's story in the latest issue. Percy's father, William Austin Galvin, was Station agent at Marchwell, then Churchbridge, Saskatchewan, both towns close to Esterhazy.

Bill Rolston's story was indicative of the many interesting challenges Relief Agents experienced. In Percy's early years, he was assigned to a station where the agent had a goat. So, in addition to his duties as

Station Agent, he had to tend to the goat – including milking it!

Thank you for a great magazine that so vividly portrays railway life of that era, of which those with the fluent fingers on the key played a significant part.

*Sincerely,  
Lillian Galvin,  
Regina, Saskatchewan  
(Wife of Percy Galvin)*

---

## February 10th

In 1943, at the age of sixteen, I was employed as a Western Union messenger at Gainesville, Florida. The manager of the Gainesville office was Mr. George O. Hack, who began his own career as a messenger boy in 1910.

Because this was during World War II, many "Regret to inform you" telegrams were delivered from the government, along with business and personal messages and holiday greetings. Mr. Hack was considerate to his messenger boys, favoring them with any small deed to their advantage. I shall never forget him.

Quite by chance, I recently met Mr. Hack's son. I advised him of my working for his father those many years, that I had become a railroad telegrapher, and that I had transmitted and received Western Union telegrams at small communities where no other WU service was provided.

Mr. Hack's son informed me that he had his father's personal files plus a few WU items in storage. He allowed me to wade through these items. Among that collection of historic materials, I found a partial story that Mr. Hack had written. Readers of *Dots & Dashes*, many who are former telegraphers, will appreciate the story and photographs.

*Sincerely,  
L.A. Bailey  
Florida FX Chapter*

*Read this story and see the historic photographs beginning on page 10 ~Editor Jim*

---

## February 12th

I feel the manner in which I learned to telegraph well enough to pass my wire test in the spring of 1946 was a bit unique and involved Past President Lavina Shaw.

In 1944, five months before my 17th birthday, having just finished writing my final grade 11 exams on June 30th and with no idea what I was going to do, my Dad (the station agent) advised me that the Railway needed men. Soon, Dad's boss in Winnipeg asked to see me.

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So, on July 10th, after passing the medical and Chinese puzzle eye test, I was sent to Grand Beach as assistant agent. My parents sent me a half size steamer trunk with clothes. Thereafter, I only got home on short visits between jobs.

I enjoyed relief work at many places, then at the urging of a good friend and relief agent, Harvey Shipley, who was going to Mafeking for what looked like a long relief, asked me to bid on the temporary assistant agent job. So I did, and I became the successful bidder.

Soon we were joined by Barry Till as night operator, who was also a junior man. We had daily train in the day time, but the express and LCL freight came on a passenger train 1:30 northbound and 5:30 southbound.

We were isolated because the access road was barely serviceable in the summer, then blocked with the first snowfall and unplowed, in the winter. We had no electricity. It was a three hour daily chore for me to fill all the lamps, change mantels, and pump up the gas lamps. Coal oil lamps in those triangle enclosures on the outside wall of the station provided limited light at train time, but we managed to make it work and got the platform trucks into the freight shed. Heat from the old coal fired potbellied stoves was welcomed.

The main activity here was shipping bags of frozen fish from three packing houses to many points on the prairies. There was also a contractor harvesting pulpwood from a bush camp ten miles out of town.

The labour for this operation was mainly German Prisoners of War. We were isolated, so these prisoners were allowed to carry on necessary activities without supervision. The Germans picked up supplies at the station and were also involved in hauling and loading pulpwood onto rail cars. These prisoners became accepted for what they were, namely young men who were caught up in a war not of their own making. Their blue coveralls with a big red circle patch on the back set them apart from everyone else. To my knowledge, they were not subjected to any open hostility, but were left to carry out their work without much notice by the locals.

Mafeking was basically a clearing in the bush with only a general store, a café with a single pool table, a post office, a forest ranger station, auto garage, three packing houses, a church, and a number of residences to house the estimated three hundred people who were involved in the fishing and forestry industry.

I got board and room with a wonderful Metis family, Octave and Ada Baron. While it was basic accommodation in a small eight by five foot room, with a sack stuffed in a hole in the window to prevent heat loss, this log cabin with its low ceiling would warm up quickly when Octave got the tin heater dancing in the morning.

The only other heat was the kitchen range. But, due to wood as the fuel, there were only a few embers still burning by morning. However, what we lacked in amenities was made up by home entertainment. Playing cards filled in the quiet times along with music. Octave was an excellent fiddle player. We harmonized using banjos and guitars. We had a great time.

Because Harvey, Barry, and I were all about the same age, we spent lots of time around the train station. When the passenger train arrived around 1:15 o'clock, there was always action at the station, with people waiting on parcels or meeting passengers. We often spent evenings at the station for lack of any other activities in the village.

I had mastered the basics of telegraphy from a machine that my Dad rented for me during my last year in high school. The code machine had a paper tape which could be adjusted in speed. After I started working, I began to take more interest in using Morse code.

While hanging around the station one evening, I heard someone sending slow Morse. This was a training session, with Morse being sent at a speed that I could copy. Three girls at Sifton, Manitoba really got me interested, so I was there nearly every evening. As I was struggling to copy every word of their conversation, I found that my speed improved to the point that I got brave enough to join in the dialogue. The girls on the other end of the wire were Lavina McPhedran (Our own Lavina Shaw, former International President of MTC), Ann Herman, and a sister of Lavina's. Later I met Ann Herman, operator for the CNR, but I lost track of Lavina, and was unaware that she married Earl Shaw.

Mr. McPhedran was the agent at Sifton. He was well known because he had developed a method of salvaging wool from old clothes. He also developed a platform wagon on rubber tires with a braking system which engaged with the tongue was folded back into a vertical position. I believe this wagon may have been the forerunner of those used at airports.

By the way, it was only after I joined the Morse Telegraph Club and read an article in *Dots & Dashes* that I realized that Lavina was President of MTC. I phoned Lavina and confirmed that she was one of the gals in Sifton who made it possible for me to pass my wire test and rules exam in 1946. Later in 1946, I became agent-operator when I relieved agent Tom Adlam at Ridgeville. That job lasted 25 years until I retired in 1969.

*Don Lorne  
Kelowna, British Columbia*

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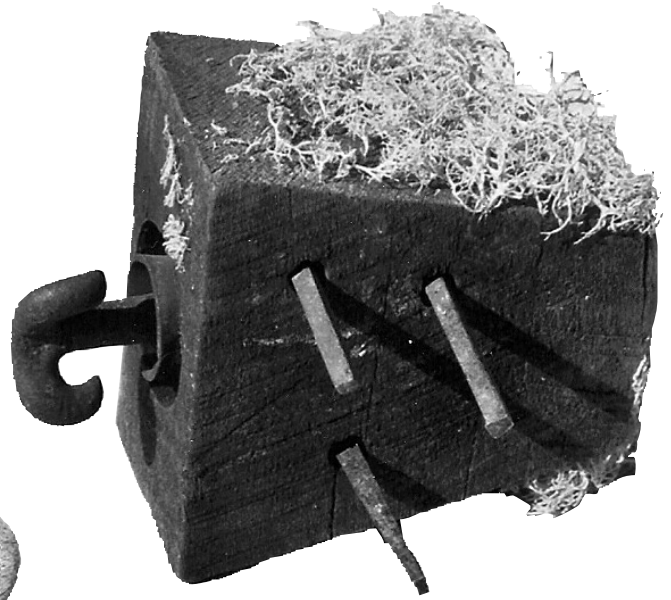
## February 19<sup>th</sup>

I am enclosing for your interest some photographs of a Wade insulator and a Ramshore insulator. The Wade was found in a mud puddle near Reliance, Wyoming. The Ramshore came from a tree in the Sierras.

I was fortunate to be able to acquire these some time ago from various collectors. As this year is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1861 Transcontinental Telegraph Line, completed in 1861, I thought D&D readers would enjoy seeing these pictures.

It is amazing to think about 12 words per minute cross country with today's fiber optic video cables. Other pictures include a segment of the 1857 trans-Atlantic cable banded by Tiffany's in NYC.

73,  
Dan Crotty, N6CJH  
Ventura, California



*Rutland Railroad, continued from the front page 5*

Upon entering the station through the front door (trackside), on your left you will see a partition with two doors. The first door was the baggage express room. The second door was a utility supply room. To the right is the ticket window, stove, and Dutch door, which allows access to the office. The waiting room is furnished with obligatory seating benches and various railroad photos and ephemera. Pass through the Dutch door and you are in the office which is filled with filing cabinets, a safe, ticket case, roll top desk, ticket counter and cash drawer, plus the operator's desk, complete with operating phone and telegraph equipment, which is original to the station. My biggest goal in doing this project was to convey a real sense of this building the way it looked when it was in operation as a working station I think this has been achieved.

After all the work and money spent, I am convinced that this restoration project is probably the most satisfying project of my lifetime. It was a project that I felt I HAD TO DO. To say that Chris and I were inspired might be an understatement. I think the word DRIVEN would be more appropriate.

Many people have visited and more continue to come by. It is a pleasure to have people visit and for

us to observe their curiosity and sense of wonder at what once was.

This project resulted in many rewards, but the ultimate gratification takes place on those typical Ogdesburgh Sub winter nights. It's about 20 degrees below zero. The wind is howling and the snow is blowing. But inside the Mooers depot sit Larry and Chris. The coal stove is glowing red and the office temperature is about 80 degrees. The lights in the waiting room have been dimmed and the office is illuminated solely by the golden glow of a green shaded pendant light over the operator's desk. We're definitely talking railroad. We might be having a pipe of Half & Half or a good cigar along with a tasty cup of "Joe." The telegraph is clicking away and the rhythmic "tick-tock" of old Seth Thomas is nearly hypnotic. It just can't get any better than this!

*Here are interesting follow up notes: After 42 years in the U.S. Customs brokerage trade, Larry Marnes is now retired. Larry handled the customs clearance of many highway and railway shipments crossing the U.S. - Canadian border at Champlain and Rouses Point, NY. He maintains the station as a railway museum. This on-going project keeps Larry will occupied in his retirement. Life is good.*

# THE JOURNEY OF GEORGE HACK FROM TELEGRAPH MESSENGER BOY TO RR MANAGER

*Readers, this story represents the typical career ladder of a telegraph operator. Read L.A. Bailey's letter dated February 10<sup>th</sup> on page 7. This is the interesting story about Mr. George O. Hack.*

Leavenworth, Kansas was my birthplace, the site of the first United States federal Penitentiary. I remember well the many incidents with that institution, among them the escape of several convicts who had over a long period, fashioned wooden hand guns, which they covered neatly with tin foil. The convicts seized a locomotive in the prison yards, convincing the guards that the guns were the real deal. These bold convicts boarded the locomotive, crashed through the large iron barred gates, traversed a considerable distance over the government reservation, then disembarked and fled to safety. This was quite a sensational break; my recollections are that of the seven, all escapees were captured but one.

Another sensation was when Clyde Stratton and another convict dropped into a manhole in the penitentiary's large kitchen, which led to a sewer, which carried raw sewage several miles to the Missouri River. Clyde crawled that distance and was reported to have fled to St. Louis where he was captured some months later. The second convict could not withstand the violent sewer gasses; he was later found at the bottom of the manhole pleading for help!

Those were some of the youthful recollections of a seventeen year old youngster, preparing for a career with Western Union. Here is another: Jack Johnson, the famed pugilist, later became an inmate of the Leavenworth prison. I had a ringside seat at a July 4th celebration, where he engaged in a cat-and-mouse fistcuff for the better behaved inmates.

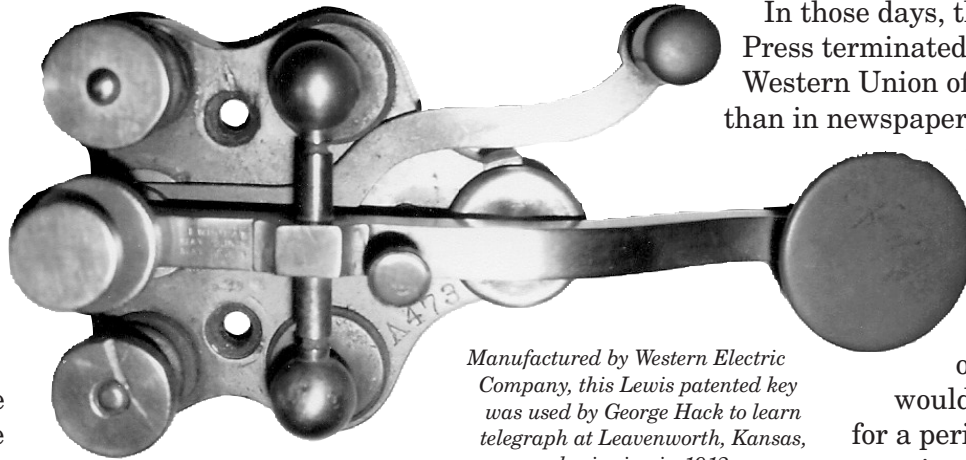
Fast forward to the date of my first day as a messenger for "Uncle Wes." The date was July 1, 1910. That was also the occasion three days later, July 4th for the World Heavyweight Championship

between Jack Johnson and Jefferies in Reno, Nevada, where Johnson clinched the victory. The chief clerk to the Warden of the Penitentiary and I became fast friends. Shortly before or after that ring-site boxing match in the prison yard, this friend invited me to the end of one of the cell blocks to meet Jack Jackson. The chief clerk asked Jack to do a little bag punching for me. Jack hit the bag about a half dozen times, then gave it a mighty lunge. The bag flew way down the cell block. Jack grinned, showing his heavily gold filled teeth. He asked me, "Do you think I look BIG?" I gasped and replied, "You are bigger than a mountain!" Jack then roared with a mighty laugh.

In those days, the Associated Press terminated their wires in Western Union offices, rather than in newspaper offices. It worked like this: A press receiving position was assigned where an operator

would be seated for a period in the morning and again in the afternoon. Long

*Manufactured by Western Electric Company, this Lewis patented key was used by George Hack to learn telegraph at Leavenworth, Kansas, beginning in 1912*



sheets of "foolscap" rested beside a "blind" Remington typewriter, which was customarily, the property of the operator or perhaps the manager. The Remington typewriter was the choice of most operators. But, the typing could not be seen as typed; however, if one wished to take a quick glance, the carriage could be lifted an inch or two, and mistypes XXXed out, or pencil corrections made. Visible typing as we know it today was to come later in the future.

I recall once seeing a Yettman typewriter, which could be plugged in on a circuit and the dots and dashes could be operated by a standard keyboard. These are now collector's items. Then there were the

*continued on next page ►*

Smith Premier typewriters, with two sets of keys, one set for capitals, the other for lower case letters.

Years later, Western Union contracted to buy a large number of Remington red front, all capital typewriters, which the company furnished its offices, thus making for standard typing. Those blind Remingtons were dubbed as a "mil" by operators. In very small offices, where telegrams were copied by hand, this was referred to as "fist" recording. That method lingered for some time in railroad offices where telegrams were sent and received. Early operators were known to have developed a special style of "fist," easily recognized for legibility and beauty. Small letters such as "I" were often dotted by small circles, rather than a dot.

Associated Press terminals were manned by regular Western Union operators, who normally handled telegrams, but spent part time copying A.P. news. This copy was delivered by messenger to the subscribing newspapers.

In addition to Western Union's tie-in with the Associated Press, the company also sold "special events," such as championship prize fights, World Series games, election returns, etc. Usually the newspapers would subscribe for this service, which would cost from \$25 to \$50. These events would be recorded in the Western Union offices and carried by messenger to the subscriber. The subscriber would then have an announcer read the bulletins over a megaphone, or in the case of election returns, they would be re-copied on a slide and flashed on a large

screen, where they could easily be seen by the large audience standing out of doors.

On July 4th, my duties required me to carry the Johnson-Jeffries bulletins, round-by-round to the newspaper. Several hundreds of fans would try to get me to tell them what was in these bulletins before I could deliver them to the newspaper. I just smiled and buttoned my lips. I knew that they would know

within a few moments. After announcing these bulletins, they would promptly be posted in the large plate glass windows of the subscribers.

Later on, when radio stations came into being, these special events would be subscribed for by the stations. In such instances, Western Union would install a special circuit direct from our relay office to the station.

Western Union would assign an operator to cover the event. Thus, radio fans could hear the voice, and in the distance, the dots and dashes. Sometimes, a Morse telegrapher would be in the radio audience. They would have the benefit of hearing the news prior to the announcer's voice! Those were the "Good Old Days!" But, of course, modern methods are more prompt. Later, these Associated Press circuits were terminated directly in the newspaper offices, and the operator worked full time and was paid for by the paper. Football was also handled as a special event. These subscribers were mostly located in college towns such as Gainesville, Florida. All games played by the Gators away from home were usually subscriber for by the newspaper.



*This photograph takes us back in time to May 9, 1962. Behold the Western Union Telegraph Office in Gainesville, Florida. George Hack, W.U. manager, is seated at the front desk*

*President's Line, continued from page 3*

changes to the structure of the Board to include several additional nominees. Plans also call for modifying the By-Laws of our organization to allow greater flexibility for struggling Chapters to remain intact when facing declining membership or other difficulties, which arise on occasion.

### **Thank you!**

As long as we're talking about our volunteers, it seems as good a time as any to say "thank

you" to so many fine men and women who make MTC a success. Over the years, I have served on several non-profit boards, participated in a number of volunteer organizations and served as an officer in a number of fraternal organizations. I have found MTC to be one of the most enjoyable organizations in which to participate. MTC is truly an organization comprised of outstanding men and women. Thank you to all who make this organization a success.

# THE ROOSEVELT AND THE ANTINOE

*Readers, this is part three of a three part article written by and submitted to Dots & Dashes by MTC member Pat Kelly of Sidney, British Columbia, Canada. Part one of this true drama was published on pages 13-14 in the fall issue of Dots & Dashes. Part two of this story was published on pages 4-5 of the winter issue. And now, here is Part three, the final outcome. Recall that the time was January 1929 and the setting was the stormy North Atlantic Ocean. ~Editor Jim*

That night, a memorial service for the lost men was held in the Roosevelt's saloon. Seating was on the deck, because chairs were unusable in the heavy rolling seas. Then the gale increased and all night the liner rolled and pitched heavily as searchlights were kept on the stricken hulk.

The Antinoe could show only a feeble oil lamp. To the credit of American seaman, many men from the Roosevelt's crew volunteered to again man a rescue boat, but owing to the weather conditions, it was deemed that this was out of the question. Some had even offered to swim to the Antinoe with a line, but Captain Fried could not entertain any action that involved the probable loss of more lives.

There was little rest for the three Radio Officers: Upton, Smith, and Ransom. Regular traffic had to be sent, weather reports copied, and routine watched maintained. Third Radio Officer Ransom spent the night on the bridge straining to read the Antinoe's despairing blinker messages and sending back encouraging words. He was relieved at times by Upton and Smith.

In the wireless room, the chairs were lashed down and the main transmitter, a powerful five kilowatt arc, gave trouble as the waves washed over the top of the room and broke down the insulation at times.

In the interim, another British freighter, the Laristan, sank in heavy seas not far away as the German liner Bremen stood by. The Bremen eventually was able to rescue some crew members after the Laristan sank, but some twenty men perished, including Captain Littledale and operator Jukes. All honour to the German crewmen who did their best to aid the British freighter.

Tuesday the 26th dawned dark and stormy. It was difficult to make out the Antinoe in the high seas and spray. At 8 a.m., Roosevelt flew her ensign at half mast in mourning for their lost shipmates, and the Antinoe did likewise. Numerous shots from the liners Lyle gun, a line throwing device, failed to reach the freighter.

Stubbornly, Captain Fried wired his owner in

New York that he intended to stand by the stricken vessel until it sank or until rescue was possible. Casks and empty lifeboats carrying lines were all set adrift in hopes of reaching the Antinoe, but in the raging gale, all failed, being carried away in the winds and spume.

Aboard the Antinoe there was little rest for respite from the cold and wet weather. Huddled on the windswept poop deck, hoping for a chance of securing a line on board, they waited. Their ship has a thirty degrees list and was lower in the water. Finally, a line fired from the Roosevelt fell over the ship. Hope soared as it was hauled in. Then the line chafed and parted.

That evening, the wind dropped considerably and the seas, though high, appeared to be moderating. Chief Officer Miller readied a boat and with his picked crew, left the liner in a lee from his ship. They reached the Antinoe opposite Number 1 hatch. Miller called for the men to jump quickly as he could not make fast. After several attempts to keep the boat alongside and some broken oars, twelve men from the Atinoe leaped and were carried safely back to the Roosevelt's side about 8 p.m.

Passengers and crew lined the rails and cheered as the boat, under the watchful eye of the ship's powerful searchlight, returned and many helped pull the rescued men on board. Most were covered in fuel oil and all were exhausted. They were taken to the ship's hospital for recovery. The rescuing boat was too badly damaged for further use and was set adrift. This was the fifth boat to be lost.

At midnight, Antinoe sent urgent signals on the blinker saying they had a fifty degree list and their ship was now nearly submerged. Cape Race radio in Newfoundland had just broadcast another storm warning, so the outlook seemed dark. Plainly, it was a case of now or never. At 12:50 a.m., Chief Officer Miller again made a second attempt and set off for the Antinoe in Number 3 lifeboat, getting away in a sheltering lee.

*continued on next page ►*

Under a now bright moon, his boat reared and plunged in the still heavy seas. Arriving opposite Number 1 hatch again, the remaining men jumped. Captain Tose was the last to leave. Operator Evans missed the boat and landed in the water, but was safely rescued. Then a strong pull brought the boat under the towering sides of the liner. Lines, ladders and nets were ready and both crew and passengers helped to pull the now exhausted men on board. Evans himself was helped on board by Second Radio Officer Nelson Smith, who greeted him warmly. Captain Tose was carried to the bridge where he thanked Captain Fried. Fried replied that it had taken a long time but it was worth it. At 1:35, three long blasts were given on the Roosevelt's whistle as a farewell salute to the sinking ship. Passengers cheered and the Roosevelt resumed her voyage. Next day, more gales swept across the North Atlantic and the Antinoe sank along.

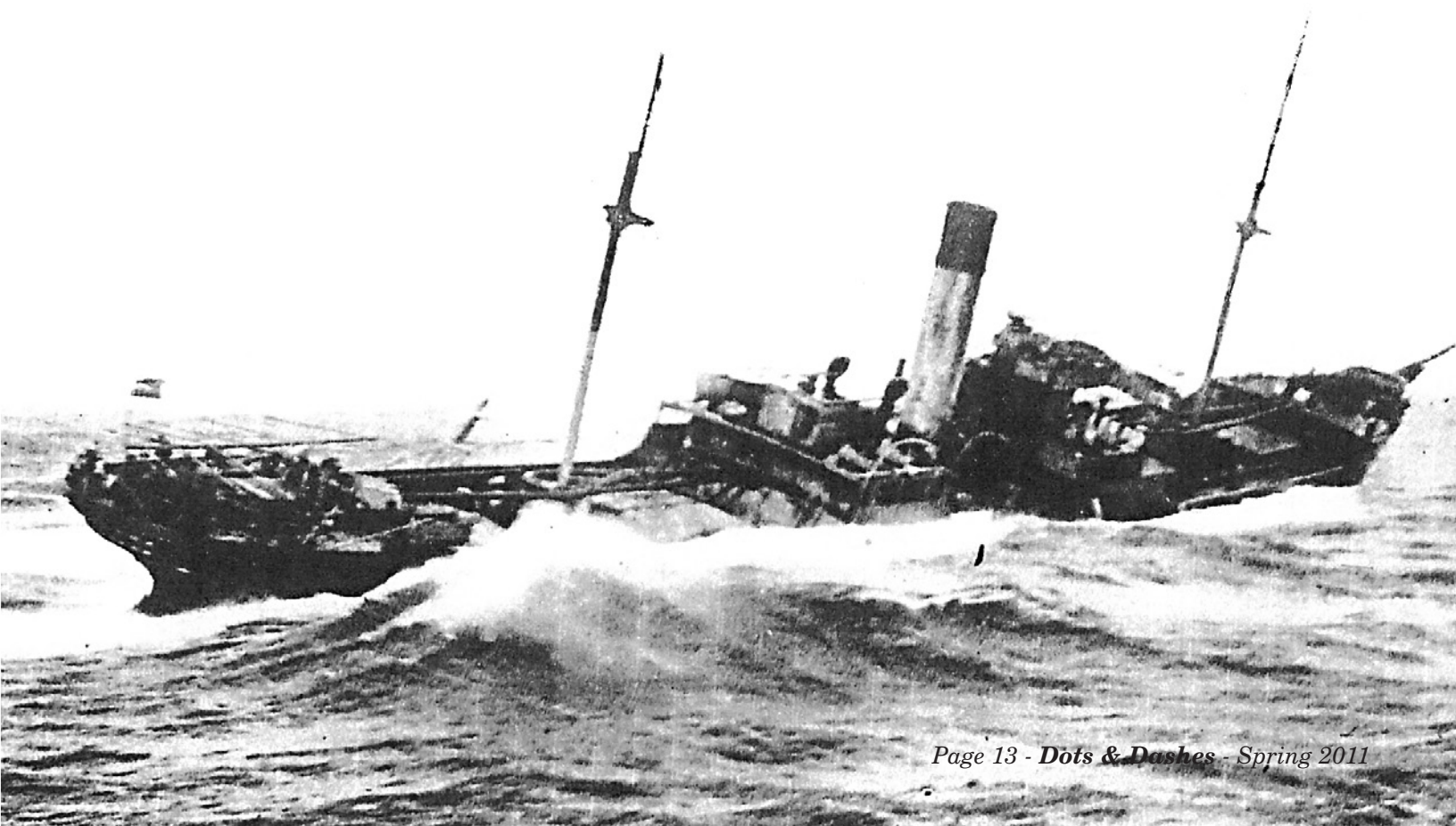
Fried's detention time was three days, twenty two hours and twenty two minutes. He had been on the bridge for eighty four hours. Two lives, six boats and much oil and other material were lost. Deck, engineering, catering and wireless crew members were very tired but relieved and proud to have contributed to the rescue of twenty five fellow sailors. Radioman Evans sister sent a heartfelt and grateful telegram of thanks to Captain Fried. Fried thanked her and replied that without Evans, the Antinoe crew would never have been rescued.

Thus, ended a truly dramatic and highly successful marine rescue operation.

*Curiosity got the best of me with this story. How did our MTC author, Pat Kelley, know so many intricate details about this tragic event? On January 12th, I talked by telephone with Pat Kelley and asked him my questions. Pat confirmed that he was a radio operator for 40 years, mostly on ships, but also on a few shore stations. Pat was first in the Royal Canadian Navy as a "Telegraphist", then after the war on vessels with the Department of National Defence. These were tugs, tankers, freighters and research ships.*

*Pat stated that he is now retired, but has a hobby of writing historical items, mostly with a wireless background. For the article that he authored for Dots & Dashes, "The Roosevelt and the Antinoe," Pat interviewed people who were crew of those ships. "I got the story from the chief operator, himself," stated Pat. Also, Pat notes that Radioman Kenneth Upton has since died (January 1985) in Tucson, Arizona.*

*Incidentally, Pat, now 86, mentioned that his Dad was a telegraph operator who worked at Potomac Yards in Alexandria, Virginia. "My Dad loved the railroad," he added. ~Editor Jim*



# CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY'S HARD LEARNED PROCEDURES

by Jack Harris

Read Jack's letter dated January 30<sup>th</sup> on page 7

While growing up in a CNR town, Aylesbury, Saskatchewan, I spent a good deal of time at the station. The northbound passenger train from Regina used to arrive at 12:10. I used to rush to the station from school to get in on the action. And, oh did that waiting room used to be wonderfully warm on those cold winter nights!

Several people encouraged me to carry coal for the agent, Edwin J. Pallansche. Their story was that I could do errands for him and he in turn would teach me the code and some station procedures. But I never took advantage of the opportunity.

Instead, when I graduated from high school, I joined the Navy. Ironically, I joined the Navy as a telegrapher! During my three years in the Navy, I spent ten months at school learning the International Morse code and Navy radio procedures. My later two years were aboard ship, sending and receiving code. Working four hours on and four hours off made me a good operator. The code came fast and steady with no breaks.

At the end of my three years, my father suffered a heart attack and became bedridden. Since he needed help with his poolroom and barbershop, I opted out of my five year Navy contract via a compassionate discharge to help at home.

So I returned home all geared up to become a barber. After spending three months hanging around the poolroom and barbershop, I decided that life was not for me. So I went to the train station and talked to agent, Howard West, who suited me up with a practice sender, tobacco can for my sounder, and a list of the letters and numbers of the railroad code. During the spring of 1951, I sent and received the railroad code with a straight key hour after hour. However, I spent very little time at the station, did not sit in and OS a train, did not take any orders, nor learn any of the station procedures. Yet, I felt like I was a hot operator, ready to jump into railroad telegraphy!

As my father's health improved, he was able to return to his work, so I became in search of another paying job. I went to the CNR dispatching office in Regina to see Chief Deering. There were no openings. Needless to say, I was discouraged.

Next, I borrowed my Dad's car and drove to

Saskatoon to meet the CPR chief at that station. At Saskatoon, the day operator sat me down and said he wanted to test me on the code. I had not stated that all my telegraphy in the Navy was copied on a typewriter. I don't recall what he sent me, but at the end of my first line, he hollered to the chief, "He's ok, chief." Following a short interview with the chief, I was hired!

Next, I was given a written exam. Upon completing this, I reported to the chief. He assigned me to relieve telegrapher Plumb at Insinger. So on August 20, 1951, I got a pass on train #52 to relieve CPR station agent, Mr. Plumb.

When I arrived at Insinger, about 2000 o'clock, the station was closed, but agent Bob Plumb was there waiting for me. At that time, there was a one day transfer allowed in which the new hire was to spend a day reviewing the books, etc, while getting paid.

The next morning, I did not know what hit me. Telegrams were pouring in, a bell was ringing from the dispatcher's office for meet orders, a track foreman at Wicket was asking for a lineup, and customers were pouring in the station with eggs and cream for shipment to Yorkton creamery. It was a sink or swim situation! I had NEVER copied a train order before, so had a beast of at time copying my first one then recopying it legibly. I also had a difficult time copying railroad code, keeping in mind that 10 numbers and 13 letters were different between the American and International Morse codes.

To top off the chaos, when a train whizzed by, I didn't know which direction it had gone nor how to properly report it to the dispatcher. After a couple days of this trial by fire, the dispatcher realized that the new guy at Insinger, me, was in trouble. During my third day on the job, an experienced operator spent time with me explaining railroad practices. He was a terrific guy. He calmed me down, gave me encouragement, and just sat on the counter speaking softly. Even though I didn't learn any procedures from him, I was assured that I was not going to get fired and that I could come thought this thing okay. Whew!

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Well, I did get through those first trying days, learned to copy and send railroad telegrams, made express tickets for express shipments, met trains with the express truck, helped the drayman, copied orders, and even handed up orders to passing trains with the hoop. I also billed out cars of grain for Fort William; all this within two weeks.

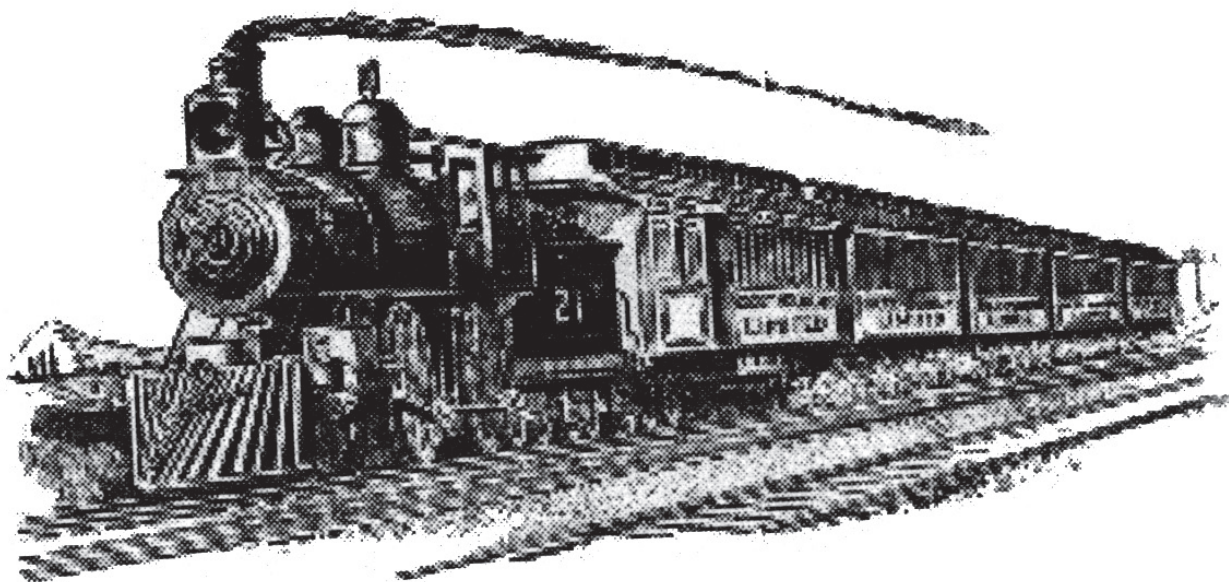
But I knew nothing about cash reconciliation, reporting daily, the daily grain report to the grain operator, nor had I ever pulled down or put back up "the block."

Within a few days, a freight train rolled by. I noticed a guy dressed up sitting in the top of the cupola. I suspected that he was some kind of train official. The next day, I learned that this may was the assistant superintendent. He came back in a "speeder" to have a frank talk with me. Within the next two weeks, a rules inspector and an assistant superintendent came to see me. Oops, I had not taken down "the block" immediately after that freight train passed by.

Somehow, I also got connected with the postmaster, whom spent time with me going over the books. The postmaster and I spent each evening and that weekend going over the books and attempting to do things right. (It is ironic that ten years later, I worked at Esso bulk stations within the province of Saskatchewan auditing their books!) Boy was I relieved each day when closing time came.

At the end of two weeks on the job, Bob Plumb returned. I assisted him making out a transfer. To this day, I never had any repercussions from my training period at Insinger.

Immediately following my time at Insinger, I was sent to Prince Albert for an early morning operator's trick. That was a wire job only with no phones ringing. Although a bumpy road, my initiation to railroad procedures had been successful. I had become a genuine railroad telegrapher!

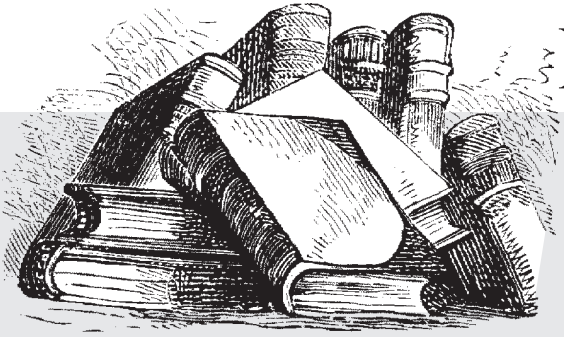


## DO YOU KNOW?

### *Should Your Computer Be Turned Off When Not In Use?*

The answer is yes. The Carnegie Library of Pittsburg, Science and Technology Department, explains why. Personal computers consume lots of electricity, typically 270 watts for the computer and monitor. Multiplied by millions of PC's across America and Canada and elsewhere, we are talking big electric bills. Carnegie Library therefore recommends turning off both the computer and the monitor at the end of each day and during your absent weekends. Carnegie claims that this will not only save electric energy and money, but will extend the computer's lifetime.

# BOOK REVIEWS



With the arrival of the sesquicentennial of the U. S. Civil War I thought it appropriate to investigate what writings were available on the use the electromagnetic telegraph during the war. Most of you probably know that the Civil War was the first war to be significantly prosecuted by the use of Morse's invention, particularly in the north. Although I am not personally widely read on the Civil War, although a little investigation showed that a large two volume tome simply called *Plum*, for its author's last name, seems to be

regarded as the primary document detailing the involvement of the telegraph in that conflict. I have thus chosen to review this book in this issue of *Dots & Dashes* as a starting point.

**The Military Telegraph During the Civil War in the United States (Volume 1): With an Exposition of Ancient and Modern Means of Communication.**

**William Rattle Plum**

Although the use of an author's last name when referencing a book is not unusual, it is particularly appropriate for this document as it has the daunting title of *The Military Telegraph During the Civil War in the United States: With an Exposition of the Ancient and Modern Means of Communication, and*

*of the Federal and Confederate Cipher Systems; Also a Running Account of the War Between the States.* It was written and published by Civil War telegraph operator William Rattle Plum in 1882 seemingly in the fear and with the concern that the significant contribution of the civilian U. S. Military Telegraph to the success of that war was about to be lost and the heroic deeds and sacrifices of it's telegraph operators both forgotten and unrewarded. As a person also interested in things "maritime," to me, it sounds not unlike the complaints and concerns I have heard from former civilian merchant mariners, who served and suffered during WWII. In some sad ways, it seems history does repeat itself.

Despite the last part of the title, if you're looking for an account of the battles of the Civil War you will need to look elsewhere as the author himself states, "It is not within the scope of this work to describe battles, except so far as may be necessary to demonstrate the service of the telegraph." For example, the first chapter of the second volume addresses "Gettysburg" but says almost nothing about the actual battle. What the books do in great detail is describe the telegraphic preparations and actions before, during and between battles. Individual telegraph operators are named along with their assignments including many stories of their bravery and sacrifice. Our buddy Jesse

Bunnell is mentioned several times as his assignments changed and he was moved around. The construction of lines and the perils of keeping them repaired under the almost constant threat of bushwhackers and guerrillas is documented with many harrowing escapes and captures of operators and linemen detailed. Quite a number of military telegrams are included to show the nature of the communications and the thinking of the commanders. As the civilian U.S.M.T. was created suddenly at the beginning of the war, conflicts with existing military services, in particular the army signal corps, are documented. But as the U.S.M.T found it's way and proved it's worth to those charged with the successful prosecution of the war these problems were overcome. Although the book is focused on the U.S.M.T. and thus the Civil War application of the telegraph by the Federals, there is some information about telegraph activities by the Confederacy including several operators named. It documents some efforts of both sides to tap the telegraph lines of their enemy.

The first chapter of the book examines the history of communications technologies up to that time both in general and as used for war purposes. The second provides details of cryptographic technologies used during the Civil War and the appendix to the first volume details "Cipher Number Nine Complete." The appendix of the second volume contains the annual reports of the head of the U.S.M.T., Anson Stager, to the Quarter-Master General and a listing of the names of all the known U.S.M.T. telegraph operators. The rest of the chapters are organized both by area of operations and time, generally proceeding forward in time but both within and between chapters, jumping around to different locals, detailing actions in one area and then going back and detailing actions in another which were occurring

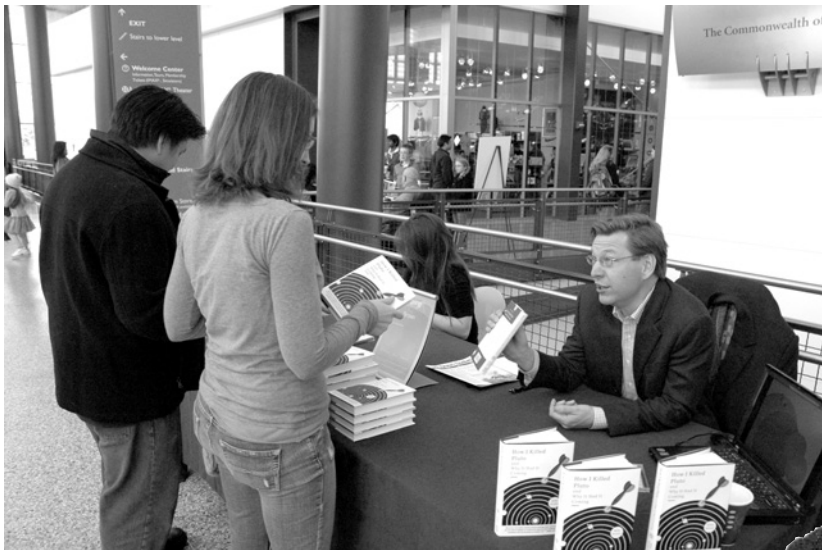
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somewhat contemporaneous with the earlier described events. If you are not familiar with the Civil War, this makes it a little hard to follow at times. Having a good set of maps on hand, which I didn't, might help here as would a better understanding of the process of the war overall. But then again providing that, as he stated, was not the author's purpose. There are maps in the books but they are not very readable. The books are made from scans of a copy of the original which at one time was kept by the library of the University of California and like most such scans contains any printing flaws found in the original copy.

An important thing to me about the book is that it was written by someone who was there and who in preparing it communicated with others like

himself who reported from direct experience. It is not just the distillation of some historian looking at old records and analyzing events from a distance of both time and space. Thus, although written a little over fifteen years after the end of the conflict, it has an immediacy lacking from other such histories I have read. This immediacy makes it very compelling reading. That said, it is not an easy read. The level of detail and the somewhat confused time lines require patience and effort to be able to follow the action. But it does have its share of "ripping yarns" which give life to the facts and figures. In my opinion, it is a book well worth reading and then reading again for both telegraph and Civil War aficionados. I obtained my copies of both volumes from Amazon in late 2010. I hope you enjoy!



Astronomer, Dr. Mike Brown, meets visitors at the Smithsonian museum, where he autographed copies of his new book, How I Killed Pluto.



Dr. Brown, professor of astronomy at Caltech, reads the winter issue of Dots & Dashes. Dr. Brown may have especially found interest in the page 9 article about telegraph operators on other civilized planets.

# “30” SILENT KEYS

*News of our brothers and sisters who have closed the key*



## Edmonton MO Chapter

**GEORGE C. KENNIE**, age 93, died on Christmas Eve, December 24, 2010. He was a long time member of the Edmonton “MO” Chapter; his personal sine was GK. George was born on February 24, 1917 in Swift Current, Saskatchewan. As a young man, he worked as a telegraph messenger, where he learned to telegraph. George became employed as an operator by the Canadian National Telegraph Company in Winnipeg, and then later was transferred to Calgary.

During World War II, George joined the Royal Canadian Air Force. His knowledge of telegraphy and interest in radio technology eventually earned him a position as a Wireless Radio Instructor for the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.

While in Winnipeg, George met the love of his life, Beth, at a dance. They were married on December 18, 1942. The couple had two sons, Jerry (now deceased) and Scott. Beth passed away in December 2008, after nearly 66 years of marriage.

Following World War II, George and Beth spent a brief period in Comox on Vancouver Island. Then they moved to Edmonton, where George worked as a commercial operator and wire chief for the Canadian National Telecommunication for nearly 30 years. He retired from CNT. George and his family lived in the same house for decades and continued to live there even after the death of his wife.

George was a regular user of the Canadian Hub and could usually be contacted by simply calling “K” or “GK.” He was relied upon to fix broken telegraph instruments and to assist in installing operator positions in local railway museums. He could also be counted upon to volunteer for telegraph demonstrations whenever asked, and he enjoyed meeting the people who stopped by, especially the children who showed any interest in telegraphy. George faithfully carted his beloved all-caps typewriter and stand to all demonstrations to authenticate souvenir telegrams received.

George was a friendly, unflappable person with a keen sense of humor. He was active in neighborhood affairs, always willing to help those in need. He was also an avid gardener, a good ice skater, a better than average tennis player, a

devout pickerel fisherman, a hockey fan, and he enjoyed nature’s beauty on many family camping trips.

George is survived by his son Scott and his wife Connie, by his daughter-in-law Judy, and by grand children and great grandchildren.

*Lavina Shaw adds one more note of humor.* When the doctor told George that he was dying, George spoke these last words: “Oh, I guess I will be losing my driver’s license!” 73 to you, George.

*L.R. Keith “KY” Bailey adds more:* All of us who use the “HN” HUB are extremely saddened to hear of this loss. George was the first person I contacted using the HN Hub. He and I traded tone tapes, letters, and occasional phone calls. George, “GK” worked for the Canadian National Telegraphs, while I worked for Western Union, states L.R. George began his career as a messenger boy, later advancing to the responsible job as telegrapher, then Wire Chief. GK grew a large garden, often describing his problems with a varmint rabbit. So when the HN HUB went sour, GK used to blame it on “The Rabbit chewing on the circuits.” George loved ice hockey and even in his 90’s George would ice skate with his son, Scott, daughter-in-law Connie, and other family members.

George was immortalized by a joke that he told years ago: A dog came into the CNT commercial telegraph office to send his girlfriend a telegram. The dog wrote on the message blank the word “WOOF” nine times then handed it to the clerk. The clerk said to the dog, “You have woof written nine times, but you can send another woof, number ten, for the same price.” The dog looked strangely at the clerk and replied, “But then, the message would make no sense at all.” From then on, everybody who used the HN HUB would finish their conversations on the wire with “73, woof.” One night, Lavina Shaw heard this strange closing and asked what the “woof” meant. George got on the wire to explain.

“KY” offers this poem which was written by George Kenney:

My thoughts are often in the past, of men  
whose skills were sure and fast;  
Nicknamed brass pounders, and tuned to  
Morse sounders.

*continued on next page ►*

Ten on a line and check twenty-five, the wires were copper and so much alive; They handed the hearts, the pulse of a nation, sometimes with sadness, sometimes with elation. Regret to inform you...baby born today... mortgage foreclosed if you fail to pay; Dad, I'm stranded in Toronto; wire money & please by pronto. They did their job with so much pride, knowing their kind were a group aside; The offices are gone, the wires are dead; but of the Morse operators – not enough can be said!

*Thanks to Jim Munsey, Secretary-Treasurer of the Edmonton Chapter for this detailed information.*

### Winnipeg WG Chapter

**J. ROGER BONOT**, age 80, passed away suddenly at his residence in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Roger was born on November 21, 1931 at Saint Boniface, MB. He learned telegraphy at Devlin, Ontario in 1949. Then he was hired to begin work on June 16, 1950 as a telegrapher at Port Arthur, Ontario with the Canadian National Railway. On November 23, 1954 he was promoted to train dispatcher. Roger then worked at various operator-agent jobs in northwestern Ontario and Manitoba, also at dispatcher positions in Ontario, Saskatchewan and British Columbia, retiring as a dispatcher in Winnipeg MB on December 31, 1988.

Roger joined the Morse Telegraph Club on January 7, 1991. He is survived by his wife, Lucille, two children Georgette and Mike, and two grandchildren.

*Thanks to Dan Kollesaich, Secretary-Treasurer of the Winnipeg Chapter for this information.*

**JOHN T. BORETSKI**, age 84, passed away on January 11, 2011 at the LakeWood Health Center in Baudette, Manitoba. John was born on October 24, 1926 in Elma, MB and learned his telegraphy from Archie McKinnon, the Canadian National Railway agent at Elma. John began his career working as an agent-operator for the CNR on September 11, 1944 at Marchand, MB. He worked at various locations on the CNR main line between Winnipeg, MB and Armstrong, Ontario, on the CNR south line between Winnipeg, MB and Fort William, ON, and on the Graham Subdivision between Conmee, ON and Sioux Lookout, ON, and

finally as agent-operator at Baudette, MN from 1967 until his retirement on May 15, 1985.

John joined the Morse Telegraph Club on December 21, 1999. He was preceded in death by his wife, Jean, in 2010, and is survived by his four children, Dale, Diane, Debbie, and John, plus six grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

*Thanks to Dan Kollesaich, Secretary-Treasurer of the Winnipeg Chapter, for this information.*

### Maple Leaf ON Chapter

**WILLARD F. BANDY**, age 86, died on December 5, 2010. He was born on October 2, 1925 in North Bay, Ontario. Willard learned telegraphy in North Bay in 1942, and then started his career with the Ontario Northland Railway, where he worked four years. Next he joined the Canadian National Railways, where he worked as operator and agent operator.

Several years later, Willard transferred to the Toronto "C" Office. For awhile later, he was Assistant Traffic Manager at Gravenhurst. He eventually retired as middle management for the CNR.

Willard and his wife raised several daughters. He joined the Maple Leaf Chapter in June 1988 and became active with the Huntsville & Lake of Bays Railway as an operator during the summer months.

*Thanks to Don Laycock, Secretary-Treasurer for the Maple Leaf Chapter for this info on Willard.*

### Unknown Chapter

**HAROLD HANSON** passed away on January 1, 2011. *Thanks to Kate Hanson, daughter of Harold, for this information about her dad.*

**PERCY ALBERT GALVIN**, age 90, passed away on June 23, 2010. He was born in 1921. Percy served in the Army Dental Corps during the Second World War. Following that, he worked for 37 years with the Canadian Pacific Railroad as a Station Agent-Telegraph Operator, retiring in 1985 as Operator at Regina, Saskatchewan. Percy maintained a keen interest in telegraphy and collecting railway memorabilia. He is survived by his wife, Lillian, daughter Lori, three brothers and one sister.

*Thanks to Lillian Galvin, Percy's wife, for this interesting information about her husband. Also read her letter dated January 31st on page 7.*

*continued on next page ►*

### **Milwaukee Madison MW Chapter**

**ROBERT JAMES CONNELLY**, age 86, of Madison, Wisconsin passed away on January 8, 2011. Bob was born in Madison on September 23, 1924. After his service in the U.S. Army, Bob began his 42 year railroad career with the Milwaukee Road Railroad. Bob was also a member of the Masons and had a tenor singing voice.

Bob married Yvonne "Bonnie" Warren in 1948. They raised their children in Madison. He is survived by his daughters Pam, Linda, and Donna, plus grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and friends.

*Thanks to Bob Pluntz, Secretary-Treasurer for the Milwaukee Madison Chapter for this information.*

### **Thomas Edison TD Chapter**

**WALTER L. QUINN** died on December 7, 2010. Walter was a retired Grand Trunk Western telegrapher.

*Thanks to Al Skornicka, Secretary-Treasurer of the TD Chapter for this information.*

### **Sacramento SA Chapter**

**DOC DYER** died of cancer on January 16, 2011.

*Thanks to Larry Cardoza, Secretary-Treasurer for the SA Chapter for this information.*

### **Vancouver DI Chapter**

**W. R. STEPHENSON**, age 80, passed away on June 27, 2010 in Victoria British Columbia. His wife, Mary, predeceased him in 2004. Bill was born on April 19, 1930 in Tionaga Northern Ontario, where his father, Sam, was agent operator for Canadian National Railways. Bill attended the famous one room school, "School on Wheels," sponsored by the railway and managed by Fred Slocum and his wife, Celia. This school was frequently stored on the passing track between assignments. This school served the isolated areas throughout northern Ontario, where there were only a few children of railway personnel, trappers, and prospectors. The Slocums were good friends of the Stephenson's; Fred and Celia were Godparents to Bill. The family moved to Barrie in 1942, when Sam bid on the operators job.

Bill joined the CN Rail in the late forties and worked many locations around Ontario. He was promoted to several management positions, trainmaster, etc., and later became the assistant

to Vice President R.A. Walker in Edmonton. Bill retired in 1989 to Victoria, BC.

Through his membership in Barrie Pensioners Association, he stayed in touch with his many friends and shared many stories of his career.

*Jim Munsey adds a little more info: Bill Stephenson served as a train dispatcher at Capreol prior to his becoming a supervisor.*

*Thanks to Harold Morrison for this information. W.R. Stephenson was mentioned as a Silent Key in the previous issue of Dots & Dashes, but the info was so sparse that I requested info from anyone who may have known Bill. Harold came to the rescue.*

### **Montreal-Ottawa GO Chapter**

**JOHN OUELETTE**, age 83, of Stanstead, Quebec died on January 14, 2011. John worked for the Canadian Pacific Railroad at various locations on the Schreiber Division and at numerous locations on the Smiths Falls Division. In a later stage of his career, John and his family moved to the Saint Lawrence Seaway.

*Thanks to Roly Lauriault, Secretary-Treasurer of the Montreal-Ottawa Chapter for this information.*

### **Rochelle RC Chapter**

**NELSON BUDD WILDER**, age 85, of Mount Prospect, Illinois, died on June 5, 2010. Nelson was born on February 24, 1925. He served in the Air Corps during World War II. Following that, he returned to Mount Prospect, where he spent the rest of his life. Nelson worked as a telegraph operator for the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. His wife, Helen, was also a telegrapher and had more seniority than him, bumping him from jobs during their early years! Married for 61 years, Nelson and Helen raised two children, Alan and Wendy.

*Thanks to Keith LeBaron for this information.*

### **Washington-Baltimore WA Chapter**

**CHARLES T. MOONEY** of Bowie, Maryland died recently. Little is known of the details; his dues letter returned marked "person deceased." If anyone knows more information about Charles, I would appreciate hearing from you. ~Editor Jim

# HOUSE TRACK **Want Ad Section**

For Morse Telegraph Club Members

**AVAILABLE:** Videos (DVD or VHS) available to members only of "Telegraphy: How it Changed the World" – Contact Jeff Korman, Spectra Laser Systems, 877 570-LASER (toll free).

**AVAILABLE:** I can duplicate small coil springs for lineman relays. Send \$1.00 and I will mail you a new spring. If you are not happy I will refund your buck. Verle Francis WOSZF, 211 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street, McCook, NE 69001, telephone 308 345-3010.

**AVAILABLE:** O.R.T. lapel pins, 4 styles. Also 3 inch five color cloth crest of O.R.T (sounder in wreath emblem) \$5.00 each or all 5 for \$20.00. Paul D. Roy at 3874 Winlake Cres., Burnaby, B.C. V5A 2G5 Canada. E-mail: proyd@shaw.ca

**AVAILABLE:** Railroad Greeting Cards. Visit the web site of Canadian artist and Dots & Dashes member Fraser Hine for a look back at some railroad memories. Original paintings. Limited edition prints and greeting cards are available. Fraser Hine: www.fraserhine.com

**AVAILABLE:** Rail Tales books. The first four books include: *Rail Tales*, *Blow the Whistle Softly*, *Whistles of the Night*, and *Call of the Rails*. These are \$12.95 each plus \$2.00 shipping & handling. Washington state residents must include state tax (8.8%). The most recent two books include: *Down the Track* (406 pages, 120 pictures) and *Sparks, Smoke and Cinders* (342 pages plus pictures, maps, and cartoons). These are \$19.95 each plus \$2.35 for the first book, \$1.00 for each additional book. (Plus Washington residents state sales tax). The entire series of six books are \$70.00 plus \$4.50 postage and sales tax if you are a resident of Washington State. Ruth Eckes -35603 Military Road South, Auburn, WA 96001.

**AVAILABLE:** Book *Tales of the American Telegraph*. Issue #3 includes a photo layout. John B. Ryan, 11017 E. Sprague Avenue, Spokane, WA 99206.

**AVAILABLE:** PC Code Program – The Mill is a many featured American Morse and CW program with teaching, historical, and nostalgic features for users of all

experience levels. Download free from: [www.home.comcast.net/~w4fok](http://www.home.comcast.net/~w4fok) or order a 3 ½" floppy. MTC Members \$5.00, others \$10.00. Jim Farris. Contact info. 904-277-9623.

**WANTED:** Re-enactors for Locust Grove, the Samuel Morse Historic Site in Poughkeepsie, NY. Please contact Andrew Stock, Curator of Education and Public Programs at [a.stock@morsehistoricsite.org](mailto:a.stock@morsehistoricsite.org) or 845 454-4500 x13 if you are a Signal Corps re-enactor who may be interested in participation in history of telegraphy, including the annual Civil War weekend.

**WANTED:** A Bunnell "Secret Sounder" earphone (a miniature sounder mounted inside the ear piece). Will pay or trade. Roger Reinke, 5301 Neville Court, Alexandria, VA 22310 or [rwreinke@cox.net](mailto:rwreinke@cox.net).

**AVAILABLE:** 2011 Railroad Calendar. The Inland Empire Railway Historical Society offers a stylish 2011 wall calendar of historic railroad events. To order a calendar, write to the IERHS at P.O. Box 471, Reardan, Washington 99029. Their annual membership is \$25.00 which includes a calendar. The IERHS is a 501-c nonprofit corporation, so all donations are tax deductible.

**AVAILABLE:** I can duplicate small wooden resonator boxes for both 4 ohm and 30 ohm main line sounders. You will varnish or paint these to suit your desires. The cost is \$25 each. Milton Hegwood, 206 Kleven Avenue, Culbertson, NE 69024, telephone 308 278-2152

**AVAILABLE:** Period attire for telegraph operators of any era. Authentic reproduction hand crafted clothing will be made to your exact fit by a certified seamstress at reasonable prices. Several MTC members already have attire provided by this talented and well educated lady. For details, contact Valerie Mathers at 410 768-3162.

**WANTED:** Code practice cassette tapes of railroad Morse telegraphy at a speed of 30 to 50 words per minute. Contact Gene Dussault, 405 Ross Street Medford, Oregon 97501 or e-mail at [genedoso@aol.com](mailto:genedoso@aol.com).

**AVAILABLE:** "Let's Talk Trains" is now available every Sunday morning 10:00 to 12:00 noon, California time. Past shows are also available at [www.blogtalkradio.com/letstalktrains](http://www.blogtalkradio.com/letstalktrains). Cathy Stanfill, Secretary-Treasurer for the Southern California SQ Chapter moderates this weekly PODCAST.

**AVAILABLE:** Pen & ink railroad drawings on stretched canvas, frame print, art print and greeting cards. See these on the website of Dots & Dashes member Peter Hamel at Peter Hamel Fine Art American.com. Telephone 1 705 472-8860.

**AVAILABLE:** New book. I am a 38 year telegraph operator who has written a book about every tower along the old C&EI Railroad (1891-1975). My book has diagrams of 84 of those interlocker towers as well as 64 photographs of tower operation. A list is included of every known station on the C&EI with the telegraph call letters. Send \$15 postpaid to Robert McQuown, 15 Woodland, Hills Drive, Bismarck, IL, with the words "Telegraph Book."

**AVAILABLE:** New book. Hubert Jewell, President of the Washington-Baltimore Chapter, offers us his new book titled, *Working on the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad*. This book is chalked full of facts and descriptions of railroading and of Morse code communications. Hubert's book is available from the RF&P Historical Society, Inc. PO Box 9097, Fredericksburg, VA 22403-9097 or from the web site [www.frandp.org](http://www.frandp.org). The price is only \$15 plus postage.

**AVAILABLE:** Telegraph sounders, keys and other equipment for sale from the estate of a former railroad telegrapher. Contact Ray Proefrock at 562-866-3233 (home) or 562 822-6813 (mobile). *Mr. Proefrock previously donated \$1,000 to the Morse Telegraph Club in memory of his father, Jack Proefrock.* ~Editor Jim

# WELCOME ABOARD

## *News of Our New Morse Telegraph Club Members*



### Members at Large GC Chapter

**WAYNE TOMCZAK** of Hickory Hills, Illinois was born in 1942. Earning his first amateur radio license in 1979, Wayne eventually worked his way up to the extra class amateur radio license, call sign AA9WT. "What I most enjoy is operating QRP CW at 5 watts or less and only using a straight key," states Wayne. (QRP = low power/ CW = Morse code). Wayne notes that he can operate at 25 words per minute, but prefers the slower speed of 20-22 wpm. "I'm so glad I found out about your club by surfing the net. Dots and Dashes is a great little newsletter for people like me who love CW. Looking forward to a long membership," states Wayne.

*A special welcome from MTC to you, Wayne!*

**KEN R. NOFFSINGER** of Tipp City, Ohio was born on November 3, 1958. Ken first learned International Morse code as a child during the 1960's. In 1977, he earned his first amateur radio license, AE8I. Ken states that he looks forward to a productive interaction with members of the Morse Telegraph Club.

*Welcome, Ken, to MTC.*

**REX J. GOSSETT** of Centennial, Colorado, was born on June 13, 1944. Rex describes himself as a self taught amateur radio operator. He passed his FCC exam at the field office in Honolulu, Hawaii, earning his extra class license in 1978 when 20 words per minute were required. But he explains, he wanted the CW band privileges, so passing the exam took more than one try! In his own words, Rex says, "I worked in marine engineering in the Navy and have always enjoyed radio. CW is a real pleasure." Rex holds the extra class amateur radio call WI6T, which he considers to be a great CW call sine.

*Yes, Rex, you have come to the right place; welcome to MTC.*

**MICHAEL G. CIZEK**, W3MC, was born on May 21, 1954. Mike says he became a ham operator in 1975, with main interest in CW operations.

He discovered MTC last year at the Dayton Hamvention in Ohio. Mike says that he also has a lifetime interest in railroads, and in hearing and reading stories about old time telegraphers, especially railroaders. Mike worked for 38 years as a professional musician, recently retiring from the U.S. Navy Band in Washington, DC. Mike says he is now attempting to earn a living by doing tower and antenna work for other ham operators in the DC-Baltimore area.

*We offer you a special welcome to you Mike. Both your telegraphic and railroading interests can be met as a member of the Morse Telegraph Club.*

**KEN R. RSON**, AB7X, was born in Olympia, Washington on January 1, 1948. He learned telegraphy about 1971 with the purpose of earning his ham license. Ken was hired as a member of the signal crew on the NP in 1969. The following year, he was hired by the BN. Then Ken left BN to begin graduate school. Following that, Ken returned to BN in January 1971, working as telegrapher, train dispatcher, and later as chief dispatcher, manager of transportation, network coordinator, and finally as Director of Administration. He retired from that job in October 2009.

*Ken, you can teach us a few things!*

**STEPHEN KISTLER** was born on November 19, 1952. Steve says he has been learning American Morse exclusively. His goal is to be a railroad telegraph interpreter at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania in Strasburg, Pennsylvania. So in December, 2010, Stephen began his training by a mentor from the museum, the only Morse operator that the museum knows.

*Steve, we will help you learn American Morse and lots more!*

**GARY P. RUPP** of Quemby, Iowa was born on September 28, 1969. Gary says he began learning Morse code at age 14. In 1994, he earned his

*continued on next page ►*

Novice Class amateur radio license. Then by 1996, he had progressed up to the Extra class license, then requiring a code speed of 20 words per minute. Gary says he works strictly Morse on HF, mainly the 20 meter band, but also the 10 & 15 meter bands when the sun spot cycle is favorable. In 2010, Gary says he earned the Worked All Countries award and has almost completed the Worked All States (WAS) award. Now he is shooting for the DXCC award. In Gary's words, "I am a paramedic for Cherokee Regional Medical Center and have worked at the hospital for 20 years, having been in the emergency medical services for 21 years." He adds, "I find amateur radio very relaxing and enjoyable and look forward to the next Morse code contact, whether it be the next state of half way around the world."

*Welcome to MTC, Gary.*

### Winnipeg WG Chapter

**GERRY S. GATEY** was born on February 22, 1931 in Moosomin, Saskatchewan. He learned telegraphy in Moosomin then began his career as an assistant agent with the Canadian Pacific Railway on March 10, 1949. Then on August 11, 1949, Gerry worked his first agent-operator

position at Grayson, SK. Gerry worked at numerous stations on the Brandon Division including "on site" as a telegrapher at a mishap (train wreck) on the Bear Creek Hill on the Neudorf Subdivision. Gerry left the railway in 1965 because of the installation of Central Traffic Control (CTC) on the Canadian Pacific Railroad mainline and the ensuing loss of operator's positions. Gerry comes from a railway family. His grandfather, father, brothers and uncles were all employed with the CPR in various capacities. Gerry has been an avid "rail buff" all his life. His home library "railway room" is full of rail books, videos, photographs, plates, magazines, and an operating model railroad set.

*The MTC sends a special welcome to you, Gerry!*

### Florida FX Chapter

**CATELYN N. CHAMBLIN** of Lecanto, Florida joins us as a high school senior. This new member appreciated his grandfather who taught telegraphy.

*Catelyn, welcome to MTC. Your grandfather would be proud of you!*



*CNR Station at Kamloops  
from platform 1927.  
Photo credit to  
Gren Schrader.*

## KEEP IN TOUCH...

Your participation in Dots and Dashes is important. We need your stories, club news, announcements and reminiscences to keep it lively and interesting for everyone.

**Jim Wilson**  
*Editor*

**Dots and Dashes**

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North Garden, Virginia 22959  
Tel: 434-245-7041  
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*For membership changes, address updates, dues and other information dealing with membership or with chapter operation, contact your local Chapter Secretary or:*

**Roger Reinke**  
*International Secretary-Treasurer*

5301 Neville Court  
Alexandria, VA 22310  
Tel: 703-971-4095 • E-mail: RWRreinke@cox.net

*Please do not send address changes for Dots and Dashes, dues renewals, etc., to the Editor. All mailing lists and membership rosters are prepared through the office of the International Secretary.*

## Ham Radio Web Sites

For those of you who are amateur radio operators, here are three current web sites that I find useful:

[www.arnewslines.org](http://www.arnewslines.org)  
[www.usrepeaters.com](http://www.usrepeaters.com)  
[www.qth.com](http://www.qth.com)

## NOTICES & INVITATIONS

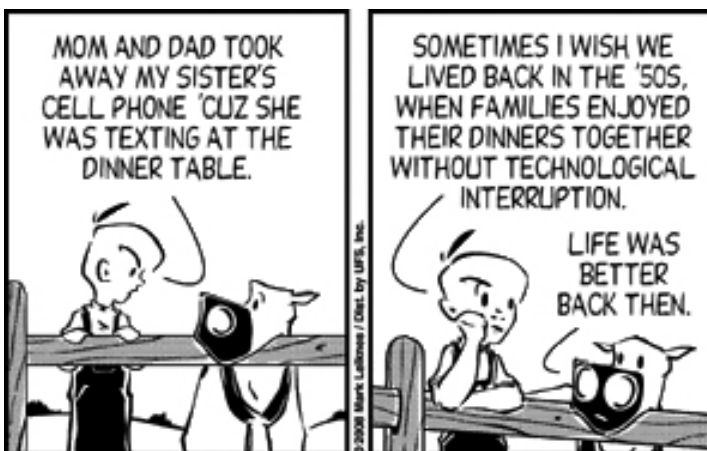
**Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.**  
**Dial-Up Information**

**U.S. (KB) HUB**  
1-269-697-4506/4508/4513  
(Michigan-Ace Holman)

**CANADIAN (HN) HUB**  
1-888-822-3728 (toll free)

**MORSE KOB PROGRAM**  
on the web at [www.morsekob.org](http://www.morsekob.org)

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