



Dots&Dashes

What

Hath

God

Wrought

The Official Publication of the Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

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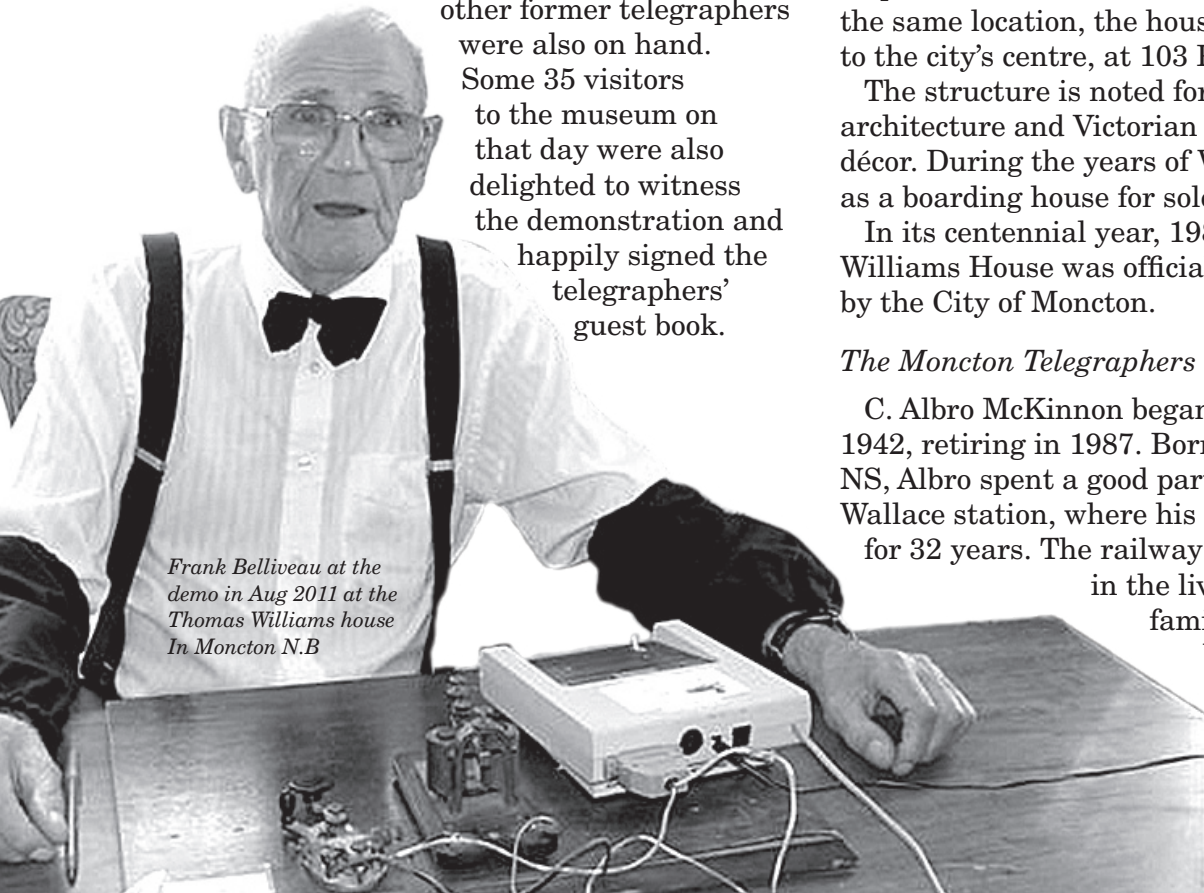
MONCTON, NB MUSEUM HOSTS MORSE TELEGRAPH DEMONSTRATION

by Neil Horsman

It was a demonstration of a 19th century invention, with the aid of modern technology.

In August, 2011, a telegraphic link was made between the east and west coasts of Canada. In British Columbia, Merve Hall of Dawson Creek; Cliff Hine of Langley; Lavina Shaw (MA) of Port Coquitlam, along with Doug Hatley (BM) of Bowmansville, ON and Bob Foote (DJ) of Truro, NS.

In Moncton, NB, Frank Belliveau, Albro MacKinnon and Neil Horsman manned the telegraph while a number of other former telegraphers were also on hand. Some 35 visitors to the museum on that day were also delighted to witness the demonstration and happily signed the telegraphers' guest book.



Frank Belliveau at the demo in Aug 2011 at the Thomas Williams house in Moncton N.B

The Thomas Williams House, Moncton, NB

The Thomas Williams House was built in 1883 on what was then the outskirts of the town by prominent Moncton resident Thomas Williams, who was at the time treasurer and accountant with the Intercolonial Railway. Six of the 11 children born to Williams and his wife Analena were later born in the house, which remained a private dwelling for Williams family descendants until 1983.

In the years to come the community grew in leaps and bounds and as a result, although still at the same location, the house is now situated close to the city's centre, at 103 Park Street.

The structure is noted for its Second Empire architecture and Victorian era interior design and décor. During the years of World War II it was used as a boarding house for soldiers.

In its centennial year, 1983, the Thomas Williams House was officially opened as a museum by the City of Moncton.

The Moncton Telegraphers

C. Albro MacKinnon began his 45 year career in 1942, retiring in 1987. Born and raised in Wallace, NS, Albro spent a good part of his childhood at the Wallace station, where his father was station agent for 32 years. The railway was to play a large role

in the lives of the MacKinnon family as two younger brothers also became telegraphers, one later becoming a train dispatcher; while an

continued on page 4 ➤



Sidewire

Comments from the
Editor of *Dots & Dashes*

By Jim Wilson



You may not have noticed that Mother Nature delayed the summer issue of *Dots & Dashes* by two weeks. On June 29th, I was sitting at our computer, editing a final proof copy of the summer issue, when the electric power to my computer went off. Eight days later, on July 8th,

electric power returned. An unexpected massive wind storm shut down much of the eastern United States.

As a result of that huge storm, my family had no well water for a week and all the food in our refrigerator and freezer spoiled. McClung Printers, the folks who print *Dots & Dashes*, also lost power. After their electricity was restored, McClung had a week's worth of printing to catch up on before they could print *Dots & Dashes*. But in the end, your patience was rewarded with your summer issue, full of lively, interesting stories from our members.

On August 18th, MTC International President Jim Wades met with MTC International Secretary-Treasurer Cindy Galyen to standardize our chapter record keeping. We will all benefit from their creative ideas for making our MTC chapter records more efficient. Jim may say something about this noteworthy effort in his President's Line.

The release date for the Spielberg feature film, *Lincoln* has been advanced from December to November. Recall that the Morse Telegraph Club played a major role in this film by offering knowledge about Lincoln's telegraph office and about what the actors should be doing. MTC members even held a telegraph class for the actors.

Using MTC equipment, President Jim Wades set up computer controlled telegraph sounders for the Lincoln telegraph office scene and for General Grant's field office scene. Also, some of our MTC members will be identifiable in this film. We were amazed and thankful at the accuracy of telegraph operations sought by movie director Steven Spielberg. And of course, the original American Morse code was used throughout this movie. So buy your popcorn, sit back in your chair and be prepared to see the Civil War era telegraph come to life on the big screen.

Meanwhile, please keep those letters and stories coming. Our readers pay attention to your every word. You have great experiences to share with us. I always look forward to hearing from you.

Jim Wilson

President's Line

Jim Wades, President
Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

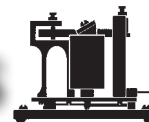


Dues time is nearly upon us, and this can mean a significant amount of work for our Chapter Secretaries and our International Secretary-Treasurer. While the average MTC members sees this as a simple process of writing a check, things get a bit more complicated as one moves up through the process.

One problem common encountered at the International level is the fact that nearly every report received from the local chapters is in a different format. This greatly increases the amount of time required to sift through the data and reconcile the membership and financial records. Other problems include:

- Checks (bank drafts) written against banks in Canada can not be cashed in the United States.
- Dues payments to both the Grand Chapter (International) and the local chapters tend to trickle-in over a long period of time, complicating and delaying the process.
- Deciphering the handwriting of a few of our members is a bit like deciphering the encrypted message traffic originated by the National Security Agency.

Dots & Dashes



The official publication of

The Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

Jim Wilson - Editor, *Dots & Dashes*

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Visit us on the World Wide Web at...
www.morsetelegraphclub.org

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Fortunately, these problems can be easily corrected. After a meeting with our International-Secretary Treasurer, we are taking the following steps:

Within the next month, each Chapter Secretary will receive either an electronic spread-sheet or a paper form, which can be populated with the necessary information required by the International Secretary-Treasurer.

Members who receive dues notices are asked to return them with their payment promptly. If you live in Canada, but do NOT pay your dues to a local chapter (member at large) but rather pay them to the International Secretary-Treasurer, please pay your dues using an International Money Order or similar instrument, which is negotiable in the United States.

All members are asked to pay their 2013 dues promptly. This will ease the process for everyone!

Please don't forget that this is a volunteer job for everyone involved. At the chapter or international level, it can be the equivalent of a significant part-time job. Please be kind to your International Secretary-Treasurer! She puts in tremendous time on the job.

DVDs

In early October, each Chapter Secretary will receive a DVD with a copy of an interview with MTC members, which took place in the early 1980s. If you are planning an October gathering, please consider having a TV and DVD player available. The interviews, conducted by CBS news, run approximately 10-minutes or so.

Also, for those of you who have not obtained a copy of the video made in cooperation with the Western Development Museum in Saskatoon, it is well worth viewing. This video, along with our MTC video produced when Lavina Shaw served as International President, is ideal for use during talks on telegraphy. These videos can be obtained through the International Secretary-Treasurer.

Spielberg's Lincoln

Lincoln will be released November 9 in the United States. It will likely be in most theatres by November 12. Be sure to check out the telegraph scenes. At the time of this writing, we have not had an advanced look at the film. However, MTC members will likely see some evidence of telegraphy in the War Department scenes and at other points throughout the movie. You may even see our Dots and Dashes Editor, Jim Wilson playing a role as an extra.

Finally, the holiday season is sneaking up on us fast! Therefore, I will take this opportunity to convey my best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season to all of our MTC members!

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

Morse Telegraph Club

Landline Morse is Alive and well!

Dots & 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

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The next issue of *Dots & Dashes* is scheduled for publication on December 30th, with submission deadline three weeks prior to that date.

Demonstration, continued from the front page

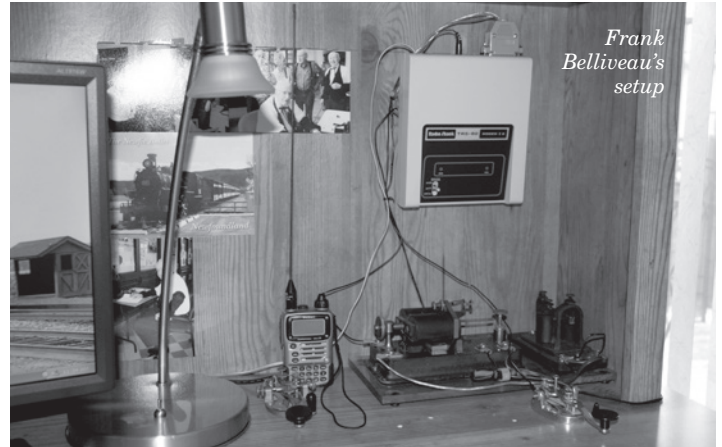
older brother was a train conductor.

Albro first learned Morse code at the tender age of 12 and just four years later took a summer position as clerk in the freight office at Pictou, NS; which marked the start of his long railroad career. At 17 he became a spare Operator, working at that position until his promotion to train dispatcher in 1951 on the New Glasgow Division.

In May 1967 the train dispatching centers of New Glasgow, Halifax and Charlottetown were relocated to Moncton, NB. Albro retired there in 1982.

Neil Horsman began his career as a student telegrapher at Berry Mills, NB in 1954. Soon after he travelled to Northern Ontario where he worked his first official shift, then as a spare operator on the Hornepayne Division working various stations between Foleyet and Armstrong. With the implementation of Central Traffic Control (C.T.C.) he transferred to the New Glasgow Division in Nova Scotia from 1960 to 1963. As further changes were being made, he bid for a position in Sackville, NB. For several years, as more changes were made, it was back on the spare board for several more years. He retired in 1993 in Moncton, NB.

Frank Belliveau was born and raised in College Bridge, NB and spent many of his early years visiting the local railroad station. Those years lead to his fascination with trains and telegraphy and he was happy to start his career as a student telegrapher in his hometown. He soon went on to work his first official shift at Scoudouc, NB on August 28, 1944. The years ahead found Frank serving at various locations across the Maritimes, including working as



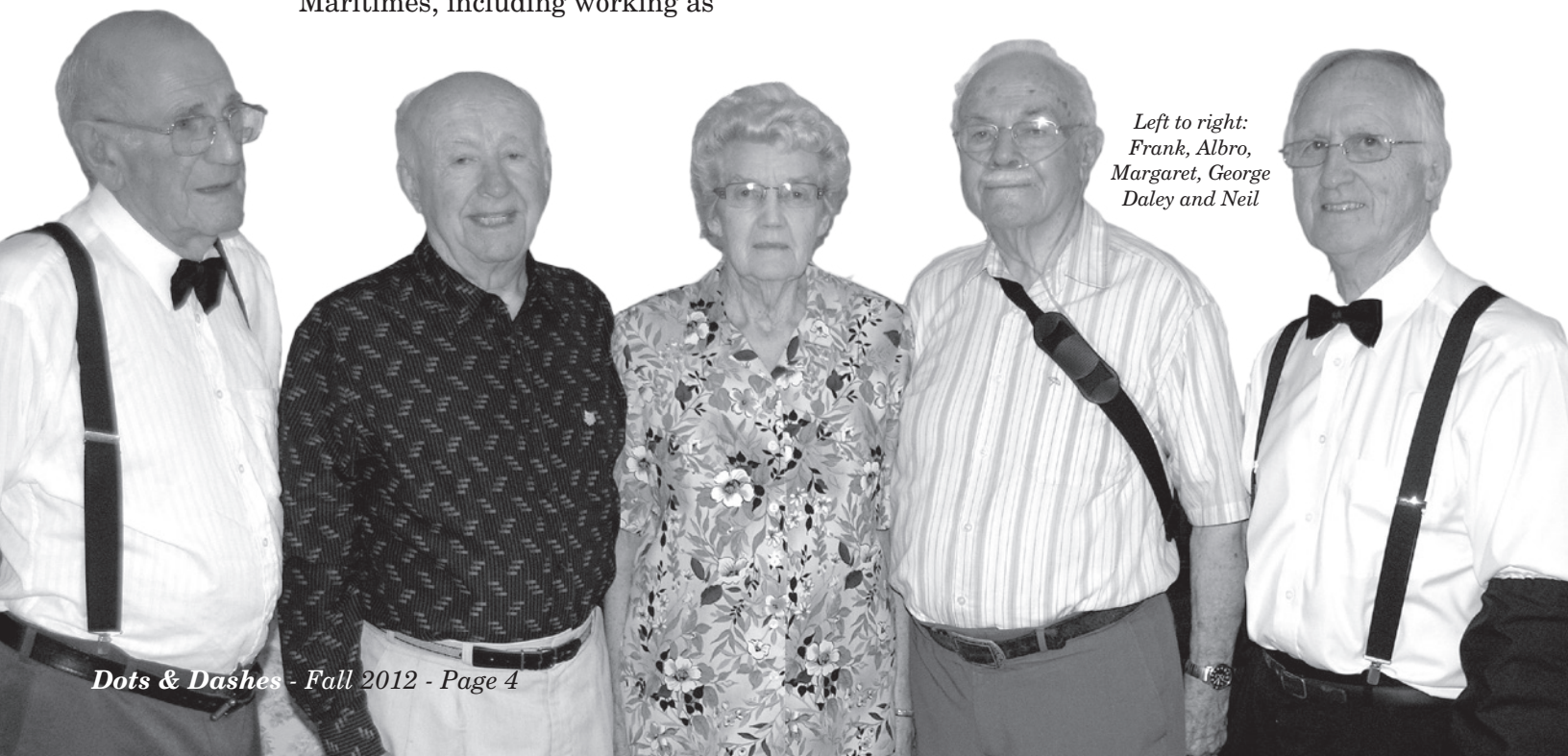
Frank Belliveau's setup

spare operator on the Edmundston, Campbellton and Moncton divisions as well as at stations on the New Glasgow Division and many other places in-between.

He was promoted to Train Dispatcher in 1951, bid to Campbellton Division as Train Dispatcher in 1955 and was promoted to assistant Chief Train Dispatcher in 1960 and returned to Moncton in 1969, where he retired as train dispatcher in 1983 with 39 years service. Frank was a man of great dedication; throughout the years he had always loved his work and spent the years of his retirement enjoying his continuing interests in telegraphy and railroading.

Sadly, after a short battle with cancer, Frank's key went silent on November 27, 2011.

Margaret and George Daley, both retired telegraphers, also attended the event and gave a brief history of their days as Morse telegraphers at C.N. Telegraphs.



*Left to right:
Frank, Albro,
Margaret, George
Daley and Neil*



*Left to right:
Neil Horsman,
Albro MacKinnon
and Frank
Belliveau*

Margaret Daley began a course in Morse telegraphy in Hartland, NB in 1942. In the spring of 1943 she was deemed ready to take a commercial office and was soon sent to Tracadie, NB. Relocating to Middleton, NS sometime later she was, among other work, responsible for sending and receiving messages which contained news of military personnel missing or killed-in-action; these somber messages were always delivered by hand. In 1945 in Halifax, NS she witnessed VE Day celebrations and riots which shocked the world and disgraced the city. Margaret left CN Telegraphy for three years to pursue other interests but returned to the job in Sydney, NS as a Morse and teletype operator. It was there she met her future husband George; their marriage in 1954 coincided with the end of her career with the

telegraph system.

George Daley - While in the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) George was trained as wireless technician which included learning Morse code. After his military discharge in 1945, he applied for a position with CN Telegraphy, was accepted, and sent to London, ON for further training. Upon completion of that training he was sent to Sydney, NS as a plant technician, where he met Margaret, his future wife. The couple married in 1954. Transferred to Saint John, NB some years later, the couple lived and raised their family there until 1968, the year that CPR took over CNT in Saint John. That same year George was transferred to Moncton, NB, where he remained on the job until his retirement in 1986.

-30-

A “JGRAPH” OPERATOR SPEAKS OUT

By R.E. Runyon AAØO, OK

(Note from Bill Dunbar: While Editor of Dots & Dashes in 1988 I received a report from two ham radio MTC members concerning their Special Event station at a town festival. Operation was by voice only and I declined to print the report since it clearly promoted ham radio, not landline Morse. They resigned in protest and in a subsequent Dots & Dashes I explained my rationale, explaining that there were numerous organizations and publications for ham radio, while MTC was just about the only group concerned with wire telegraphy.)

This article affirming my decision appeared in Dots & Dashes for Jan-Feb-Mar 1989 and for some of our newer members, may explain the mind-set of us old heads who made our living with the “Mother Tongue.”

The thrust of the “QTC 1” article (*Dots & Dashes Oct-Nov-Dec ‘88*) was right on target, and timely. I for one thank you for your courage and perceptive grasp of the matter.

I made my living as a “Jgraph” (“telegraph” sent without adequate spacing between the first four letters and the Morse “L” shortened to a “T,” resulting in “jgraph”) operator before the craft died as an art form, and have since been privileged to work in the electronics business from time to time.

Wire communication using American Morse code, and variants such as the Phillips Code, is a different animal from radio communication using the relatively slower International Morse. Radio adapted the quick code by slowing it down and putting in more air time (dashes) to facilitate its readability through atmospheric interference.

The differences are not obvious to those not exposed long-term to both systems, but an examination of the codes themselves makes it clear that even though they enjoy a common origin, they were designed to operate in different mediums.

The wire was a thing of beauty. It was so because of the artful way it was used by its operators; we could use a “quick” code with more dots and spaces because we had no QRM, QRN or QSB to deal with. It was a true binary system. In my opinion the tune sung by a telegraph local sounder, or a bank of line sounders in a busy office reproducing a fine fist or well-operated bug, outranks even the most precisely tuned aircraft engine in terms of sheer beauty.

Fortunate enough to remember “the good old days” when wire work was as much an art form as a communications medium, I worked all over

the country for the Union Pacific and Rock Island railroads when a diesel-electric locomotive was a rarity, and coal-fired steam was king.

I was a terrific operator. My fist was easy to read and I could copy anything anyone cared to send me. I was also a brash, smart-aleck kid, cocky and sure of myself regarding my telegraphic skills. I carried my Vibroplex and agate styluses with the same pride as a doctor carried his medical bag. I could mimic anybody’s sending style, and often drew frustrated “jk” breaks from other operators up and down the line when I would echo someone’s particularly bad sending habits back to them.

The days of the boomer operator were pretty much over by the time I came along, but I was privileged to work with some of the old boomers who had gone to ground with “home guard” jobs. Even though I came along twenty years too late, I identified with the romantic lifestyle portrayed by my boomer friends.

Nothing will replace the memories of those days: Of standing with my foot firmly planted on the brick next to the track to hand up orders to a 9000-class steam engine (sometimes two) bearing down on me full throttle, oil-mopping the depot floor, building batteries, handling Western Union traffic, cleaning carbons, billing milk and cream, and the dozens of other on-going chores around depots.

My seniority was on the old St. Joseph, Mo. Grand Island, Nebr. branch of the UP, and I worked virtually every telegraph job on that line at one time or another. I mastered the use of the all-caps mill, and it wasn’t until much later that I learned where the shift keys were.

I operated the “draw” bridge across the Missouri

River at St. Joseph, which wasn't a drawbridge in the pure sense. It was balanced on a big pylon in the middle of the river, and turned to allow boat traffic to pass on either side. The balance on that massive structure was so delicate that a 150 pound man could stand on one end of the bridge, and cause it to bind up and not turn.

The only true memories of those days exist between the ears of people who were there. You had to have experienced the sounds of a telegraph office at three o'clock in the morning, the stress of handling short tailed diversions, money transfers and critical train orders on a hot piece of single track run by a short-tempered dispatcher.

When those of us who lived the experience pass from the scene, these memories will take on a shadowy, incomplete existence in the written and graphic records we leave behind. The time is approaching when practitioners of the arcane art of wire telegraphy will all be gone. If the experience is worthy of preservation, other than a footnote in history, it will be up to the next generation of interested people, "buffs" if you will, to preserve the images of a wonderful era in human communications.

Present day manual code communication practice exists mainly in the hands of the world's amateur radio population. Building on the bridge of a "common language," amateurs with interests and

skills in c.w. will preserve the art, to some extent. That should foster an abiding historical interest on the part of a few practitioners interested in where it started, and perhaps generate some interest in preserving what is preservable from the era of wire communications.

With a few exceptions such as the annual wire party in April, a few commercial c.w. operations and rapidly diminishing segments of the military, no one but the amateur community still uses manual code for communications these days. Even that interest is somewhat artificial, maintained to a large extent by government regulations concerning license qualifications for HF band operations. The code requirement for amateur licensing has been under almost constant attack for many years, and may not survive much longer.

In my opinion most (but not all) amateurs achieve only minimum proficiency, adequate for licensing, then immediately abandon it. Some rise to the challenge of learning and using a second language, but not many. Those who do, develop an interest in preserving what to many is an archaic form of communication, and should be welcomed by those of us who are of like persuasion.

But everyone should remember the differences, and respect them.

-73-

THE MIRACLE OF MORSE

This article was sent to be enjoyed by readers of Dots & Dashes by Leo Nette of Victoria, Australia. While we are all familiar with this story, this is an excellent summary, reminding us of the importance of the telegraph. We, members of the Morse telegraph Club, vow to keep the craft alive!

In a small room, a number of men were gathered around a bench on which was a piece of equipment with wires attached to it, mounted in a wooden frame. The place was Baltimore, Maryland, USA and the day was May 24, 1844.

In Washington, some 60 kilometers away, another group was assembled. Amongst them stood a distinguished looking man whose hand rested on a small instrument. The man was Samuel Morse. The occasion, he hoped would mark the beginning of a revolution in world communications. This was the day on which he had promised to show that

electric telegraphy was a practical proposition.

At this time, Morse was 50 years old and was already well known as a portrait artist. While a college student at Yale, Morse had shown some modest interest in science, but he had chosen to become a painter, winning a considerable reputation in the art world. But, his artistic success had brought him little prosperity, so Morse began to consider other fields of economic promise. About 1832, he interested himself in the electro-magnet and its possible application to a system of telegraphy.

The Miracle of Morse, continued from previous page

Others were already researching the possibility of using electricity for telegraphy, but it was Morse who was the outstanding pioneer. By 1837, Morse was able to give a private workshop demonstration of a device he had designed. He showed how a signal could be transmitted by means of a succession of electrical impulses.

Morse then went into partnership with two businessmen, Leonard Gale and Alfred Vail, who provided the resources and the industrial experience, which he lacked. It was now that the Morse code, with its combinations of dots and dashes, representing letters and numerals was devised.

In the telegraph system first deployed by Morse and his partners, signals were recorded as

embossed dots and dashes on a narrow paper tape. Soon however, the tape was replaced by sound signals. Trained operators transcribed the code messages by hand as they were received.

It was not until 1843 that the U.S. government at last gave their backing, subject to a successful demonstration. On May 24, 1844 the great day came. We can only guess at Morse's feelings as he tapped out his first signal. In the room at Baltimore, a gentle clicking began, and for the first time the two towns were linked by the electric telegraph. The recipients may have been surprised by the pious wording of that first message, "What hath God Wrought!" But they can have had no doubt that they had witnessed a historic event.

TELEGRAPH HISTORY ON DISPLAY

*By Drew Jackson, Orange County Review
Published August 16, 2012 in the Orange County Review*

The only telegraph machine in Orange County sits across from the only other telegraph machine in Orange County, polished relics to the first great breakthrough in mass communications, now all but forgotten in a society steadily cutting the wires. John Buhrman, an electrician by trade and formerly of American Press, nursed a lifelong love-affair with the telegraph until five years ago when he set out to make sense of the mysterious clicks and pauses, ultimately building two complete machines and a message relay station, all from scratch. Somewhat of a rarity, even among celebrations of the past, Buhrman has had a busy year, bringing his machines to various reenactments around Virginia and some points beyond and will have them on display this Saturday for the reenactment of the Battle of Orange Courthouse..

At first it might seem like Buhrman's hobby is something

akin to model trains, something that is a private reflection of another time and seemingly another place. He has a dedicated building off from his home where the telegraph machines sit back to



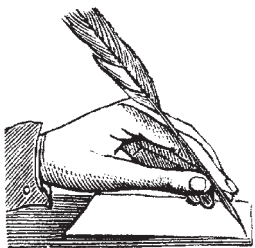
*Photo Credit: John Strader
John Buhrman sits at the first telegraph station he built, ready to tap out a message, if there was anyone on the other end to listen.*

back, and nearby, enclosed in glass, sit original parts from telegraph machines he hopes to one day assemble. The difference, of course, is that Buhrman's telegraph machines aren't models of anything, they don't sit simply to remember the past—they are the past, milled out of contemporary brass and wood, without anyone on the other line.

"I didn't intend for it to turn into something like this," said Buhrman, gesturing around the small outbuilding.

Buhrman's interest in the telegraph is really an interest in the Civil War and westerns through the eyes of childhood. He said he remembers seeing the first encountering the telegraph

Continued on page 22



Letters to the Editor

August 1st

Thanks for sending me the extra copy of *Dots & Dashes*, which I got yesterday and thoroughly enjoyed. I might have a "part 2" of "Pittsburgh Here I Come" one of these days, telling you about my early days on the Frisco Railroad. (*His humorous article appeared in the summer issue of Dots & Dashes, page 7. ~Jim*).

I am enclosing a want ad for *Dots & Dashes*. I notice that some of the ads have been in there for what seems like 25 years and I sometimes wonder if the person who sent them in is still alive! I would sure like to get my ad in because I want to sell some of my stuff before I die and my wife and kids throw it all out with the trash. I need the money to help keep my wife in the Nursing Home, which is rapidly depleting my cash. When I run out of money and need to get her on Medicaid, the Department of Human Services will take my house away and we will both be in the Nursing Home.

*Gene Wood
Madill, Oklahoma*

Yes, Gene, I've published your want advertisement in this issue. You are right; I shall contact some of the fellows who placed those long time want ads to see if these ads may now be removed. ~Editor Jim

August 7th

I wanted to alert you to the possibility of the Baltimore Radio and Amateur Television Society (BRATS) utilizing the N.S. Savannah at the Port of Baltimore as a platform for the 2013 Historic Ships Radio Weekend, sponsored by the Battleship U.S.S. New Jersey Museum at Camden on the Delaware River. The Baltimore & Chesapeake Steamboat Company, the Baltimore-Washington Chapter of the Morse Telegraph Club, and the staff of the N.S. Savannah are being apprised of this opportunity.

*Walt Mathers,
Agent, Baltimore & Chesapeake Steamboat
Company and member of MTC*

August 28th

I was originally hoping to have an additional book review ready for this issue but time is tight. I just finished with the AWA convention, where I had a telegraph display as part of the "Key and Telegraph" seminar. Next I have

a two day display coming at the Buffalo Central Terminal on September 8th & 9th as part of a "Railroanania" show. Then I'll leave the following week to spend almost a month on a private railway car, the Federal, traveling to and from the annual AAPRCO convention. The Federal will be parked on September 22nd at Union Station in Washington, DC.

For the future, I am also considering occasionally interspersing movie reviews with my book reviews. Not only am I running out of books to review, but there are some upcoming movies with telegraph content. As the one hundredth anniversary of the Titanic sinking, I am planning to review my favorite Titanic movie, *A Night to Remember*, which I just recently saw for only the second time. This is now available on BluRay disk. The other movie that I plan to review is the 1943 movie, *The Human Comedy*, starring Mickey Rooney. Much of this movie takes place in an authentic looking Postal Telegraph office. Mickey is the messenger boy.

*73,
Chris Hausler
GC Chapter*

Read Chris current book review on page 21. ~Jim

September 3rd

Note this new telegrapher's genealogy site: www.trainweb.org/telegraphgene. Agents, operators and dispatchers of Canadian railways can now be studied at this site. Rob Burnet worked hard to get this web site operating.

*73, J. Guy Hamel
GO Chapter*

Here is another opportunity to get in touch with history! For further information you may contact Rob at gohogger558@sympatico.ca or Guy at hamel.guy007@hotmail.com. ~editor Jim.

September 18th

Here is a partial "Job Description" of what we were doing all those years. They don't mention the station duties and dealing with the public. Go to www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Train_order_operation.

Larry (last name unknown)

CHAPTER NEWS

Florida FX Chapter

In a rare circumstance, Florida Chapter had not one, but two summer demonstrations during a time when the Chapter normally has no public activity at all. Both demonstrations were part of summer programs for children. One was in Ocala, FL, July 24th, and the other in Palmetto, FL, August 4th, and both had an emphasis on the role of railroads and communications in the development of the United States. While overall attendance did not rise to the level of normal demonstrations at either event, chapter members were appreciative of the opportunity to discuss the history of Morse telegraphy, including the critical role it played in railroad operations, and to demonstrate its application. Children at both locations were also given the opportunity to learn to send their names in American Morse code. Those who succeeded were given Certificates of Accomplishment, indicating that they had done so.

Chapter members Tom Bjorkman and Clyde Francis conducted the Palmetto demonstration while chapter member Warren McFarland did the same in Ocala.

Thanks to Warren McFarland, Secretary-Treasurer of the FX Chapter, for this information.

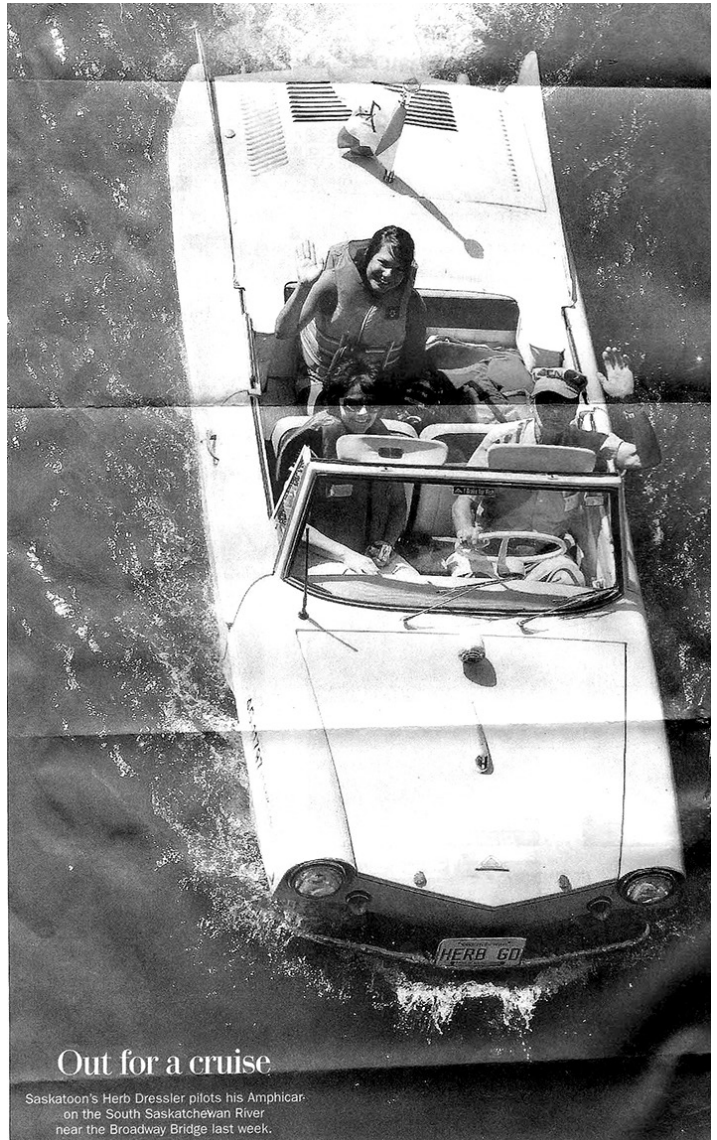
Maple Leaf ON Chapter

Although the South River Station Heritage Museum has been in operation for some time, they have never had the pleasure of seeing or hearing the sound of telegraph in their museum. One of our area retired operators acquired two sets that we wired up and mounted on boards. We positioned one set in the telegraph office and the other set in the waiting room. The principals of their museum invited us to bring our equipment and manpower up to South River and demonstrate to the public, what the telegraph was all about. Notice of this demonstration was well publicized in the local newspaper beforehand.

Two retired CNR train dispatchers from Sundridge Ontario, Wade Brown and George Brownrigg, and retired CNR operator Keith Austin and me, ex NYC operators both from Huntsville Ontario, drove to South River this past weekend (August 11-12) to demonstrate the sounds of the

historic method of communication. Not only were the children overwhelmed as they tried their hand at the key, the parents were as well.

Submitted by Russ Nicholls of Huntsville, Ontario Canada



Out for a cruise
Saskatoon's Herb Dressler pilots his Amphicar on the South Saskatchewan River near the Broadway Bridge last week.

KN Chapter's Herb Dressler pilots his Amphicar on the South Saskatchewan River on a beautiful warm Sunday afternoon. It looks like Herb picked up a couple of Mermaids on the run. Herb bought this amphibious car in 1960 and Captains it every summer.

Thanks to Bill Ryan, KN Publicist and International MTC Director, for sending us this photograph.

THE EXHIBIT AT THE HUNTINGTON

by Cathy Lynn Stanfill, President
MTC SQ Chapter, KS6CW

Visions of Empire - The Quest for a Railroad Across America, 1840-1880 is a traveling exhibit and was at The Huntington Library from April 21- July 23, 2012. On May 10, I visited this exhibit at The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens at 1151 Oxford Road in San Marino, California.

My immediate impression of the overall exhibit's layout was fantastic. I have been to many museums and have seen a lot of different room layouts, but no museum that I visited in the past came close

to The Huntington's presentation of "Visions of Empire - The Quest for a Railroad Across America, 1840-1880."

The "Tracks and Telegraph" gallery was developed and designed by Los Angeles exhibit developers MunizMcNeil for The Huntington. They did a very good job.

This exhibit focused on the 150th anniversary of the Pacific Railroad Act of 1862. President Lincoln brought the transcontinental railroad and Union Pacific to life with a stroke of his pen on July 1, 1862. July 1, 2012 became the 150th anniversary.

Christie Edinger, one of our MTC members, had some of her telegraph equipment on display in this exhibit (Displayed in the "Tracks and Telegraph" gallery located inside the Marylou and George Boone Gallery building). Inside this special room dedicated to the telegraph one would see a giant map of the United States on the floor, painting (print) of Samuel F. B. Morse on the wall (Orange painted wall), and on the other side of the room were hundreds of Stereographs by Alfred a. Hart. On the main wall was the title of the exhibit "The Telegraph" and a huge chart of all the letters

(Morse code tree). Also on the wall were a couple of framed images and descriptions. In front of this wall were four display boxes (various sizes of pillars with a plexiglass cover), and two video displays. One was where you can try a virtual KEY (Where you can tap on the touch screen computer software of a telegraph key). On the base of the display platform was a video presentation. On the floor is a railroad display (spikes, ties, rail and several visual displays).

The Marylu and George Boone Gallery building at the Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, is just one of many gallery buildings that lay within the gardens. The grounds of the Huntington Library are so beautiful with many themes. It is a great pleasure to walk from one building to another. The Huntington Library botanical gardens are really awesome in that you "feel" like you are in China, Japan, Australia, the desert, and many

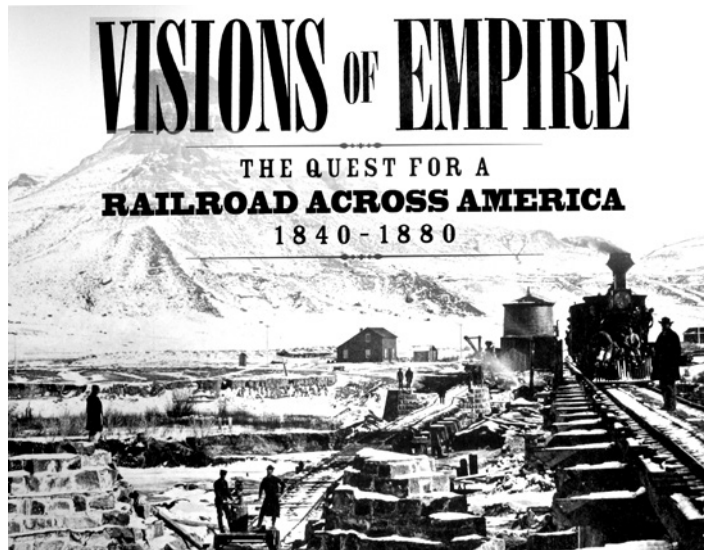
colorful flowers around the property. Visiting The Huntington is always a nice experience, any time of the year.

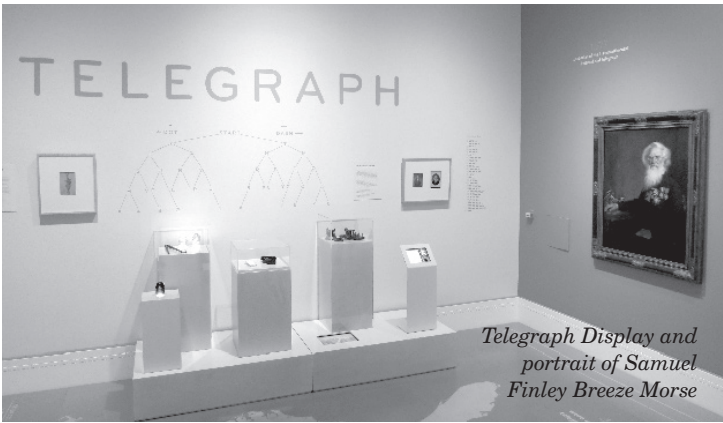
Credits:

Photographs from the exhibit (Inside the exhibit room) were taken by The Huntington. Images used by permission of The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens.

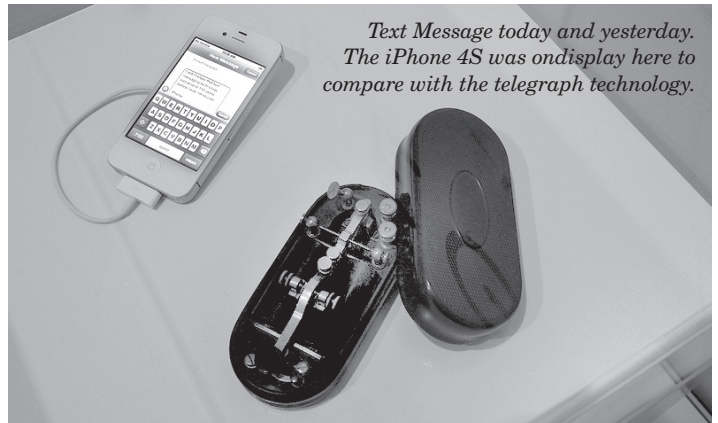
Andrew J. Russell (1829-1902), Repairing Telegraph Line, ca. 1863, albumen print, The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens.

WGM Co Insulator Deep Purple, CD 121, late 19th-Century, private lender.





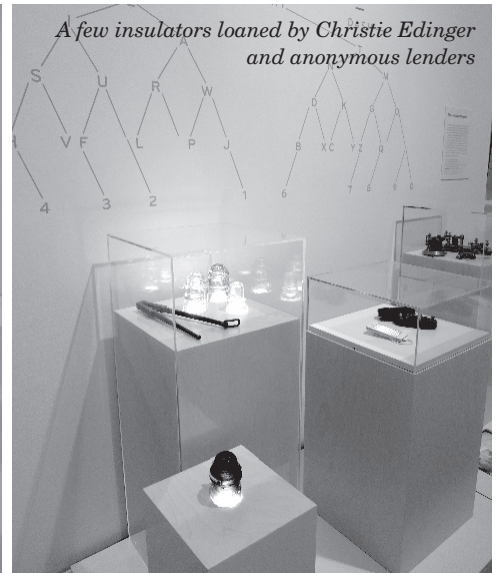
Telegraph Display and portrait of Samuel Finley Breeze Morse



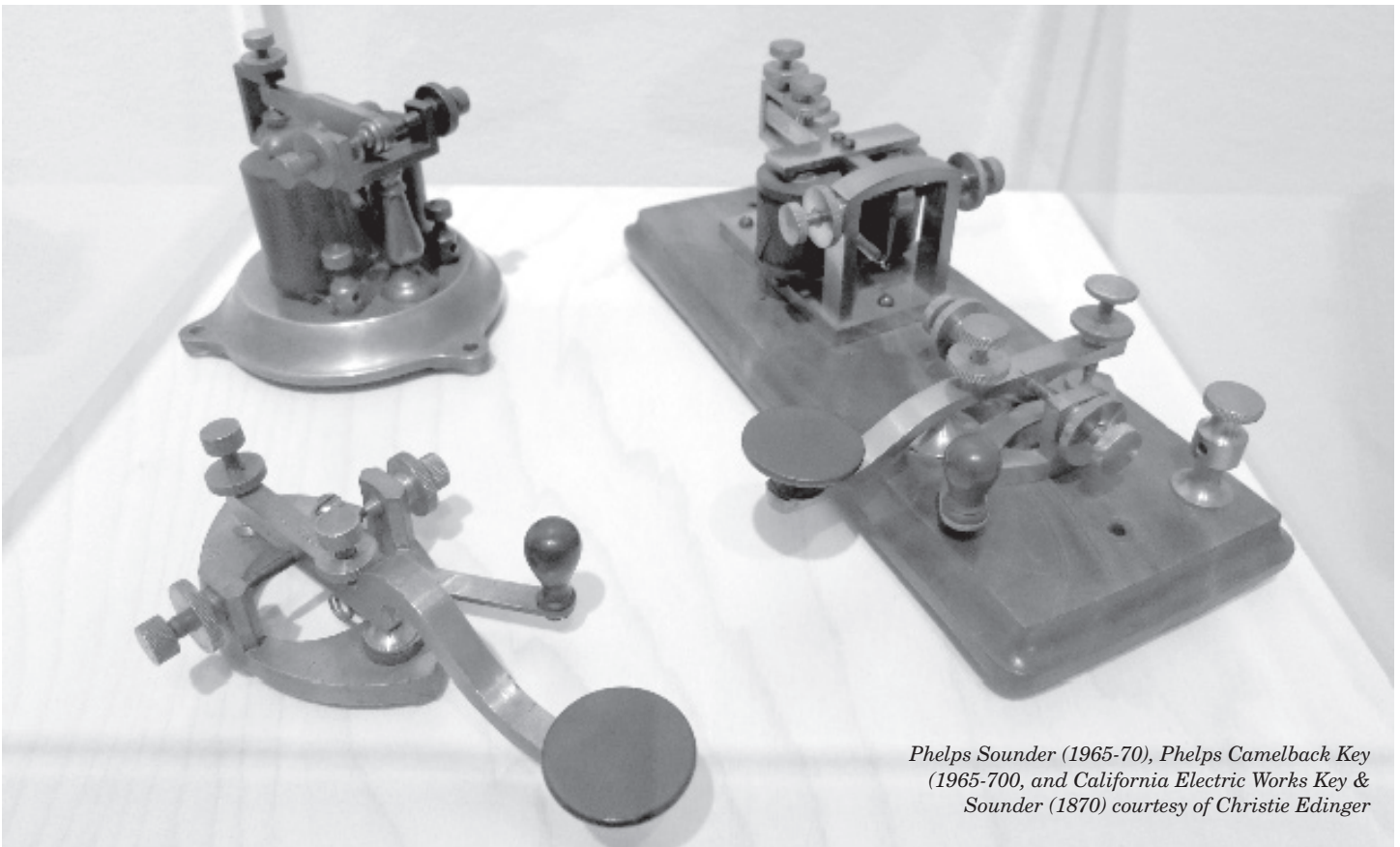
Text Message today and yesterday. The iPhone 4S was on display here to compare with the telegraph technology.



The Tracks and Telegraph Gallery



A few insulators loaned by Christie Edinger and anonymous lenders



Phelps Sounder (1965-70), Phelps Camelback Key (1965-700, and California Electric Works Key & Sounder (1870) courtesy of Christie Edinger

Klein Telegraph Lineman's Crimper Tool, late 19th-Century, private lender.

McMicking Theadless Insulator Pale Green, 1875, private lender.

WE Mfg Co Insulator qua, 1871, courtesy of Christie Edinger.

WE Mfg Co Insulator Pale Green, 1871, courtesy of Christie Edinger.

iPhone 4s -- The Huntington Library (Especially for this exhibit).

Lineman's Pocket Telegraph Relay, 1875, courtesy of Christie Edinger.

Phelps Sounder, ca. 1965-70, courtesy of Christie Edinger.

Phelps Camelback Key, ca. 1965-70, courtesy of Christie Edinger.

California Electric Works Key and Sounder, ca. 1870, courtesy of Christie Edinger.

Mathew Brady studio (active 1844-1894) portrait of Samuel F.B. Morse, ca. 1860, albumen print, The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens.

Abraham Bogardus (1822-1908), portrait of Samuel F.B. Morse, 1870, gelatin-silver print, The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens.

Albert K. Murray (1906-1992), portrait of Samuel F.B. Morse, ca. 1930-45, oil on canvas, The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens.

More Sources:

www.flickr.com/photos/huntingtonlibrary/7097415943/in/photostream/

Podcast: iTunes U "Visions of Empire: The Quest for a Railroad Across America, 1840-1880" (Five chapters available. FREE. The Huntington)

*Marylou and George
Boone Gallery*



SOME EXPERIENCES OF A ROOKIE AGENT OPERATOR

by Donald H. Young


I grew up on a little farm at Arran Saskatchewan. While attending High School in Arran I met two young fellows Bill Mayba and Walter Chez. They were interested in learning telegraphy and so they used to go to the CNR station in the evenings, where the agent, Mel Burr taught them telegraphy and with his permission they would practice sending and receiving telegraphy and after a period of time they were ready to be considered by J. S. MacDonald, Chief Dispatcher at Dauphin Manitoba, for a job. I was younger than they but it wasn't long before I became interested in the Morse code and began to go to the station with them. People suggested that I go to school to learn the code and so on the first part of November 1949 I travelled to Vancouver British Columbia to take some formal training at Sprott Shaw Radio and Telegraph school. I returned home four months later as the agent at Arran indicated to my father that he would teach me the operation of a station and I could live with his family while doing so and practice the code in the evening with other aspiring operators on the line.

I was hired on as an Assistant agent at Pelly Saskatchewan on June 29, 1950 and worked with a venerable old gentleman named R. K. Dawson who was the agent. He taught me how to enter the figures in the cash book, which other agents were reluctant to do. It was from him that I was able to learn how to keep the cash book efficiently. He said if I made a mistake, he would find it and so he gave me free rein to keep the cashbook for him. Again, in the evening I would continue my practice of the Morse code. I worked as an assistant agent for almost a year at various locations on the Dauphin Manitoba Division. During the winter months I worked at Ilford Manitoba on the Hudson Bay line and again got more practice in the operation of a station. In April 1951 I felt ready to have a telegraph test and also submitted a completed C book of the Code of Uniform Operating Rules which I passed, and after a medical I was sent to Flin Flon Manitoba to work as an assistant agent until a position became available as an operator. It wasn't long before I was asked to go to Wekusko Manitoba on what was called at that time, The Hudson Bay Railroad. The agent, Bob McCammond, had bid into a better agency on the prairies and on May 21, 1951 he transferred the agency to me and I became the

relieving agent at Wekusko Manitoba. I was only 19 years old but I used all the knowledge I had gathered from Mel Burr, R. K. Dawson and other agents I had worked with and proceeded to conduct business. Wekusko was very small with one store, a school, some houses belonging to residents, along with the section foreman's residence, and a couple of bunk houses. The main reason for Wekusko being there was to provide a yard where gondolas loaded with steel balls and other equipment would be unloaded and shipped by truck to the mine at Snow Lake Manitoba. The name of the mining company was Howe Sound Mining Corporation.

I had an assistant agent to help with the work and we shared a bunk house together. Craig Helston was one of the assistant agents that came to work there during my stay and being brand new, I had to teach him what little I knew, but he caught on and became a very helpful assistant as well as a treasured friend. It was nice to have company and we would try to cook our meals on a coal burning stove in our bunkhouse. In July it got very hot and so we gave up cooking and went to the store, bought a couple cans of Prem (luncheon meat) and a couple cans of tomatoes and ate them like as if we hadn't seen a meal in months. When you get a couple of hungry 19 year old boys and put food in front of them it usually doesn't hang around too long no matter what it is.

Not far from the town was a lake very close and accessible only by the railway tracks. On Sundays in July, the section foreman would gather the people from the town and take them down to the lake on his CN motor car with a flat car they had for hauling ties etc. Imagine this; the whole town was able to be transported on the Section Foreman's motor car and flat car. The beach was lovely white sand and since very few people knew where it was the sand was not littered. People would swim, play in the sand and have a great time.

Starting late in the month I didn't have much time until I was required to put out a balance sheet for the month of May. I worked on that balance sheet until about a week into June when I was told by the officials to get that balance sheet in or suffer the consequences. What was I to do? I contacted the veteran agent at Wabowden Manitoba, a town further north on the line. 

This kindly gentleman said if I could get to Wabowden with my agency books he would help me figure it out. There were no roads just the railroad. I went to see the Section Foreman and he consented to transport me to Wabowden with all my books and papers. The kindly old agent at Wabowden didn't take too long to find the problem and so my neck was saved for the time being. It didn't seem too long before I was faced with the balance sheet for June. Do you think I could get those figures to balance? Not a chance, and so it was on the phone to Wabowden and an invitation was extended to me to come on up and he would help. Success again, and so my neck was saved a second time.

Johnson Transport was the company that transported the iron balls into Snow Lake. The roads were gravel and were constructed mainly for the transportation of these balls to the mine. The trucks they used were brand new 1951 International 3 tons. There just did not seem to be any Peterbilts, Whites or Kenworths around in those days. Occasionally I would catch a ride with the transport trucks hauling materials to the mine. There was a hospital in Snow Lake and some pretty nurses worked there. Hence there was an attraction for two young boys. I dated one young lady but being so far away, I only saw her once or twice and then moved away.

Within no time at all it seemed that the end of July was upon us and I was faced with another balance sheet. I worked on it with the skills that I had obtained from the Agent at Wabowden and what do you know? I was successful in balancing and so I felt pretty good about things. What a joyful feeling when I talked to the Agent at Wabowden and told him that I had come of age and was able to balance without his help. I made an extra copy of that balance sheet and kept it over the years as a memento. I am enclosing a copy of the balance sheet just in case there is extra space and it can be displayed.

Now some of you may think, "What did that cost him to get the section foreman and his first man to take him to Wabowden?" And "What did he have to pay the agent at Wabowden for his services?" The answer is, that to everything there is a cost and I gladly paid it. Now these gentlemen were spiritual men of the liquid type, and so several bottles of Johnny Walker or Jack Daniels were purchased and the debt was retired in good order and everyone was very happy with their pay.

By the middle of August 1951 Gifford Crabb, the new agent, arrived and I transferred the agency to him and was summoned to Churchill Manitoba to work as an operator. Churchill was the end of the line and during a couple of months in the late summer the bay would

be open water and cargo ships arrived to transport wheat and other grain commodities to the markets of the world. It was the task of the CN Railway to get as much grain to Churchill as they could. Steam engines were the power and usually 40 cars was a maximum load. Many rules were overlooked so that the grain would get there. The crews never booked rest and as soon as they arrived in Churchill a train of empties would be made up and sent south to be distributed around and loaded with more grain to be shipped to Churchill. In order to give the engineer and the fireman a rest, the conductor would assume engineer duties and a brakeman would shovel the coal while the engineer and the fireman were sent back to the caboose to get some badly needed rest. It worked very well and a lot of grain was moved without any major mishaps.

Moving on from Churchill to work at various locations in Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan I happened to bid in a temporary position in WI office in Winnipeg Manitoba. The operators in WI were very good telegraphers simply because that was all they did all day. The old rule of "Practice makes perfect", came into effect. I found that after a month or two my skills as a telegrapher improved a lot. I worked the 24k-8k shift copying form 999 from various divisional points across western Canada.

Later on I transferred to the Alberta Division and worked in Edmonton MO office, Calder Yard, Strathcona, North Edmonton tower and East Edmonton. While working at Strathcona and East Edmonton I attended the University of Alberta and graduated with a B.Ed. degree in 1965. As all of you are well aware the death knell had already sounded and telegraphy was giving way to newer, faster and more efficient means of communicating. During the summer vacation period from teaching I used to relieve the CS operator in the CN Depot in down town Calgary, and I also worked at Sarcee yard office relieving. The remainder of my work life was spent teaching except for a stint of 6 years when I worked for the Government of Canada in the Department of Manpower and Immigration.

My final years were spent teaching Industrial Education in the far north of Alberta in a town called Fort Chipewyan Alberta, an isolated community where everything was flown in except for the months of summer when the barge was operating, and in the winter when the ice roads were open. Retirement came on June 30, 1999 and I returned to my home in Calgary where I live to this day.

“30” SILENT KEYS

News of our brothers and sisters who have closed the key



Montreal/Ottawa GO Chapter

JOHN E. RUDOLPH, age 95, recently became deceased. John lived in Truro, Nova Scotia. He had worked for the Canadian National Railroad at various locations including Halifax, South Western Nova Scotia, Cape Breton and Little Brass D'Or.

Thanks to Roly Lauriault, Secretary-Treasurer of the GO Chapter, for this brief information.

Edmonton MO Chapter

JIMMY C. LANE, age 80, passed away on August 13, 2012. Born and raised in central Saskatchewan, where he learned to telegraph, he sought a career as an operator on the west side of the Rocky Mountains. Jimmy was employed by the Canadian National Railway on the British Columbia District where he was assigned at numerous main line positions. With the amalgamation of the British Columbia and Alberta Districts, Jimmy bid in a job at the resort town of Jasper, Alberta. He worked there for many years as first trick operator, before retiring. Jimmy was a proficient operator and a personable individual who was very popular among his fellow employees. As well, he was community minded and served as a dedicated member of both the Lions and Rotary Clubs at Jasper. Jimmy leaves behind to mourn his wife, Donna, and their son, Greg.

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

Winnipeg WG Chapter

E. LORNE GRAHAM, age 85, passed away on August 11, 2012 in Kelowna, British Columbia. Lorne was born on November 22, 1927 in Carman, Manitoba. He learned telegraphy from his station agent father. On July 10, 1944 he began employment with the Canadian National Railway as assistant agent. On July 10, 1946 he became a telegraph operator, working at various stations in Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan. Lorne retired from the railroad in 1969; he joined the Morse Telegraph Club in April 2004. Lorne was predeceased by his wife,

Donnie, and is survived by sons Murray and Myles and by his daughter Michele, by six grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Thanks to Dan Kolesaich, Secretary-Treasurer of the WG Chapter for this interesting information.



Chapter Unknown

JOHN FRANKLIN DEE, age 77, passed away on March 9, 2012. He lived in Grand falls, New Brunswick.

Thanks to Shirley Dee for this brief information about her husband.

Ollie Blackburn AT Chapter

GEORGE B. KULAGE, age 84, passed away on August 12, 2012. George was born on March 22, 1928. He worked for the Wabash and Norfolk Southern Railroad for 47 years. He was also a U.S. Signal Corps radio operator in the Korean War. George and Doris, his wife of 59 years, raised seven daughters, who now have twenty-one grandchildren. In addition to being a member of the Morse Telegraph Club, George was a member of the American Legion Post 338 in Overland, MO. He earned the Golden Spike Award for operator excellence for 2009.

Thanks to William Egelston, Secretary-Treasurer of the Ollie Blackburn Chapter for this information.

TRUMAN A. GAMBLE, age 79, passed away on June 28, 2012. He lived in Saint Peters, MO about 30 miles west of Saint Louis. A Navy veteran, Truman learned American Morse in 1952 at the old Railway Communications School in Saint Louis. Following three months of concentrated learning, he went to work in Indiana for the Wabash and C&EI railroads, sending and receiving train orders as well as instructions to conductors and daily reports from superintendents. But progress changed things when the railroad telegraph was overtaken by teletype machines, by centralized tracking signaling and other advances. Because of

automation, George then went to work for General Motors. George died from Leukemia and his faithful wife died twenty-two days ahead of him.

Thanks again to William Egelston, Secretary-Treasurer of the Ollie Blackburn Chapter, for this interesting information about George.

Maple Leaf ON Chapter

ARTHUR KEITH LIVINGSTON, age 90, passed away on July 8, 2012. Art began his career as a Canadian Pacific Railroad telegraph messenger in Temiskaming, Quebec. He later learned the code from the agent, qualifying as a telegraph operator in 1939. His original telegraph job was in Thessalon, Ontario. Then he progressed to Blind River, Sault, Ste. Marie, Espanola, Sudburym, ending up in North Bay in 1948. Arthur retired from the CPR in 1975. He joined MTC in April 1993 and became an active member until his passing.

Thanks to Don Laycock, Secretary-Treasurer of the Maple Leaf Chapter, for this information.

Saskatoon KN Chapter

ROY WILLIAM BRUCE CASPELL, age 83, passed away on June 13, 2012 at Shellbrook, Saskatchewan hospital. Roy was born on February 22, 1929 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. His dad, Bert, was a CNR station agent and telegrapher. Roy followed in his dad's footsteps, learning telegraph from his Dad. Roy worked in many small communities in Saskatchewan, settling in Marcelin, in 1963. Then in 1973, Roy left the CNR to buy a "Lucky Dollar" store in Marcelin. Four years later, he turned to the CNR, finishing up his career in North Battleford, Prince Albert, and Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. He retired in 1989.

Kathie states that her dad loved life and was proud of being a telegrapher. She says that her dad became involved with the Western Development Museum at Saskatoon and North Battleford, routinely participating in telegraph demonstrations for school groups. "He took great delight in the responses of the children," she notes. He especially liked to tell the story of a young girl who said with wide eyes, "It's like magic." Roy is survived by Billie, his wife of 56 years, and two daughters.

Thanks to Kathie Nordstrom, daughter of Roy Caspell, for this interesting information about her dad.

C.D. Combs FN Chapter

LOYS ROWEN, age 86, of Denison, Iowa passed away on August 31, 2012. He was born in November 1925 in Newell, Iowa. During October, 1942, while still in high school, Loys enlisted as an Army Air Corps aviation cadet. He then graduated from Newell High School in May 1944. Next, Loy trained at aerial gunnery school in Oklahoma as a ball turret gunner on a B-17, then later on B-29's. He saw the first atomic bomb explosion on July 16, 1945 at White Sands, New Mexico. Loy was discharged from the Army in June 1946. Loys then attended Electronic TV and Radio School in Omaha to learn the art of telegraphy. He did his student training for the Illinois Central Railroad with his dad in Newell. Now experienced, he worked on the extra board and after a year and a half as a towerman at East Dubuque, Illinois, Loy worked at the Wren Tower near Hinton, Iowa. From 1950 to 1974 he worked in Cherokee, Iowa as a ticket clerk, telegrapher, and called trainmen for work.

Loys married Marjorie Martin in August 1947 in Newell. They raised three children before Marjorie contacted polio in August 1952. Marjorie was then hospitalized for fifteen months in Sioux City and Warm Springs, Georgia.

Loys also served as the Iowa District Chairman for the Order of Railway Telegraphers (ORT) and was elected General Secretary-Treasurer of the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks (BRAC), whose office was in Chicago. More than 800 agents and clerks were represented in BRAC. In July 1989, Loy then moved to Dennison, Iowa.

Following retirement, Loys served several years as the president of the Morse Telegraph Club FN Chapter. Both Loy and Marjorie, who also learned to telegraph, enjoyed presenting telegraph demonstrations at different gatherings in Iowa. Loys was also active in the Masons, Little League, and Boy Scouts. He was also a member of the Sioux City Shiners. Additional hobbies for Loy included gardening and cooking.

Thanks to Richard Behrens, Secretary-Treasurer of the C.C. Combs Chapter for this detailed information.

Grand GC Chapter at Large

JOYCE MARIE SHEPPARD, age 86, of Lewistown, Montana, passed away from cancer on August 29, 2012. She was born on May 26, 1926. "Joyce was born with a smile on her face, which mostly remained for the rest of her life," states Vance, her husband.

In 1945, Joyce graduated from telegraph school in Great Falls then began working as a telegraph operator on August 1, 1945. This was just in time for her to handle train orders for freight trains and for many troop trains bringing servicemen and women back to their homes at the end of World War II. Joyce enjoyed her work, especially all of the attention from thousands of servicemen as they passed through the many train stations where she worked. These were times before air conditioning, so most of the passenger car windows were open. This allowed the troops to shout, wave, and blow kisses her way.

Joyce worked on the "extra board" for years before settling down to a regular job at one station. Previously, she worked at

more than one hundred railroad stations, working mostly on the night shift. For several years, Joyce worked seven days a week without overtime pay. On many nights, she was the only person who was awake in some of these small towns.

On April 1, 1948, Joyce Harvey married Vance Sheppard. Daughter Barbara was born in 1951. Son Jim was born in 1957. Passing time later brought Joyce and Vance grandchildren.

Joyce and Vance both worked nearly forty years as telegraphers for the Great Northern Railroad and then for the Burlington Northern Railroad. They retired in September, 1983.

Thanks to Vance Sheppard, husband of Joyce, for this sad news. Vance says that he and their daughter Barbara and son Jim and granddaughter Jami were all holding her hands when Joyce took her last breath.



This is a photograph of Joyce holding her 86th birthday cake with the coded message "happy birthday."

DO YOU KNOW?

What are the secrets of a long life?

When I write the obituary information for our MTC Silent Keys, I find amazement that former telegraph operators seem to live beyond the average age. Is this just chance? My guess is that most telegraph operators are physically lean and fit and are mentally stimulated by translating clicks and clacks into words.

The Reader's Digest book, Prescription for a Long Life offers these long life factors:

Centenarians complain less

They remain intellectually stimulated

They maintain satisfying social relationships

They keep interested in creative activities

They sleep well with few problems

They rarely become anxious or depressed

They find solace in their religious faith

They feel financially secure

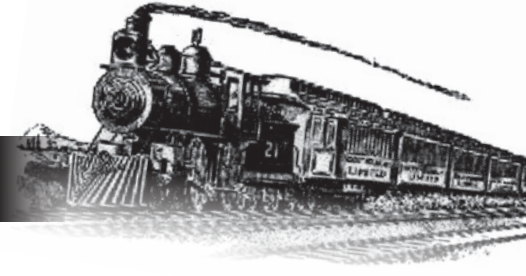
They believe they can be happy

So I wish each of you a long, happy, healthy, and prosperous life!

~Editor Jim

WELCOME ABOARD

News of Our New Morse Telegraph Club Members



Grand GC Members at Large Chapter

SHERRILL E. WATKINS was born on August 2, 1942. He retired on March 1, 2011 from the Commonwealth of Virginia after 30 years service. Previously, Sherrill had worked nearly eight years for the City of Richmond, plus four years at shipbuilding for Newport News. He earned his first amateur radio license in 1956, the Novice class call KN4OWN. In 1963, Sherrill earned a degree in Business Administration from Wingate University. On August 5, 1976, he married his lovely bride of 44 years, Barbara Sue Albright. Unfortunately, Barbara died in 2011 of cancer. "I miss my wife very much," says Sherrill. A life member of the American Radio Relay League and of the National Rifle Association, Sherrill is also a member of the Midlothian (Virginia) Masonic Lodge. He enjoys the fellowship of his North Carolina amateur radio club, riding his motorcycle, and playing with his grandchildren. Sherrill states that he believes learning telegraph raises ones IQ and helps keep a person younger in spirit.

We extend to you a special welcome, Sherrill.

STEVEN WOLF of Wayland, Maine was born on June 3, 1962. He joined the Morse Telegraph Club this past August. For additional information, Steven invites you to contact him at swolf@sfpjv.com.

Welcome, Steven, to MTC.

ALLAN G. SLAUTERBECK of Belleville, Michigan was born on February 1, 1937. His amateur radio call sign is KC8RNQ. For additional information, Allan invites you to contact him at KC8RNQ@aol.com.

Welcome to MTC, Allan

TIMOTHY BRIAN ZIMMER of Hudsonville, Michigan was born on January 18, 1961. Tim thanks the Morse Telegraph Club for keeping "the memory and spirit of the telegraph alive and clicking." Tim explains that he "never had the privilege of being a professional telegrapher or radio operator," but his interest has been strong since he was a youngster. "Movies, books and stories about the telegraph and

Morse code always held my interest," adds Tim. "I learned the Morse code in the mid 1980's before getting my Novice ticket as KA8PDC." Tim notes that since that time, he took some time off from ham radio. His call sign is now W8TBZ, a vanity call sign, his initials. "My love for CW is stronger than ever," he states. Tim also notes that he owns a modest collection of telegraph keys and that one of his favorites is a Jerome Redding camelback key manufactured during 1877 – 1880. "I've recently restored it and it's been fun bringing this old key back to live," he adds. "If only it could talk, the stories it would tell." Ken says that he can see no end to his interest in the telegraph. "I know MTC is for me," he states.

We greet you with a special welcome to MTC, Timothy.

WILLIAM A. GRAY of Linton, Indiana was born on July 31, 1930. He earned the amateur radio call sign KC9VOH. Bill invites you to contact him for further information at billgray@sbcglobal.net.

Welcome, Bill, to the Morse Telegraph Club.

ROBERT E. HURLEY of Alton, Illinois was born on April 5, 1934. Bob notes that his father, Robert E. Hurley, Sr. was a member of the Morse Telegraph Club and served as an MTC president circa 1965.

Bob, we are glad to see that you are following in your father's footsteps!

HAROLD KRAMER of Cheshire, Connecticut holds the amateur radio call sign WJ1B. He invites you to contact him at WJ1B@ARRL.net for more information.

Welcome to MTC, Harold.

ROBERT B. NEWBERRY of Pegram, Tennessee was born on February 23, 1958. He holds the amateur radio call AG4RF and he invites you to contact for additional information at AG4RF@earthlink.net.

Bob, we welcome you to a unique group of people, MTC members.

Welcome Aboard, continued from previous page

MARY M. FERYAN of Visalia, California was born on September 6, 1957. Mary earned the amateur radio call KF6QJN. She invites you to contact her for additional information at KF6QJN@comcast.net.

Mary, ladies are rare among telegraph operators. We bid you a special welcome and hope to hear more from you.

DAVID E. ENGELMANN of Milwaukee, Wisconsin was born on May 8, 1946. He invites you to contact him for additional information at davidenglemann@earthlink.net.

Welcome to MTC, David.

MICHAEL H. THURSBY of Palm Beach, Florida was born on June 30, 1946. Like many of our new members, Mike joined MTC during the Dayton Hamvention, early last May. He invites you to contact him at mhthursby@cfl.rr.com.

Mike, we will benefit from your joining MTC.

ERIC WIESEL of Beavercreek, Ohio was born on August 15, 1973. He also joined MTC at the Dayton Hamvention. Eric invites you to contact him at eiji001@yahoo.com.

Welcome to MTC, Eric.

DAVID MOFFAT of Guilford, Connecticut holds the amateur radio call AA1VE. He invites us to contact him at AA1VE@ARRL.net.

David, we hope you will enjoy membership in MTC.

EDWARD L. DOWDY of Fithian, Illinois was born on January 29, 1954. His ham radio call sign is KA9EES. Ed invites you to contact him for more information at KA9EES@comcast.net.

Ed, we hope you will participate in upcoming MTC events.

ROBERT DARLING of Owensboro, Kentucky joined us at the Dayton Hamvention.

Welcome to MTC, Bob

SHANNON BARBER of Brice, Ohio was born on October 14th, but she is shy about telling us her birthday year. Shannon invites you to contact her at tuesdaycafe@yahoo.com.

We bid you a special MTC welcome, Shannon.

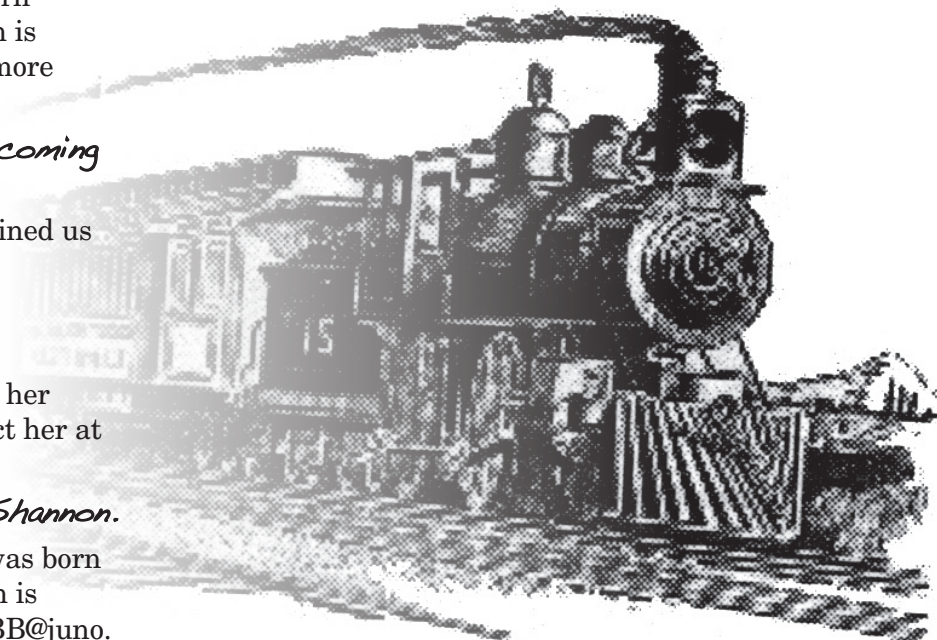
GARY L. AUCHARD of Leavenworth, Kansas was born on July 12, 1948. His amateur radio call sign is W0EBB. He invites us to meet him at W0EBB@juno.com.

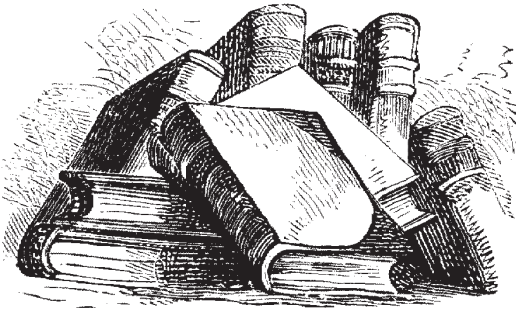
Gary, we welcome you to MTC and hope you will enjoy your new fellowship.

EARL SYMONDS says, "I learned telegraph when I was nine years old. My dad was station agent here and we lived in the station." Earl continues: "Wish I had a nickel for every tear I shed, but my dad had patience and one day, the Morse code clicked in my head. It has been a love affair since then." Earl notes that he was known for sending "good stuff" and that his sign was "SM" until someone suggested I had crossed the line and should change it to "SX."

Earl states that we can read about him and his telegraph career at www.winnipegfreepress. This article describes Earl as a railroad historian who has a model railroad for 72 or his 78 years. He also notes that he was born on Mother's Day, May 13, 1934. Earl says he has acquired a huge collection of railroad mania and memorabilia and has a 28 x 38 foot model railroad layout in his basement. Earl retired as a transportation officer from the Canadian national Railroad. His main job was closing stations; says he closed about fifty stations – and lived to tell about it!

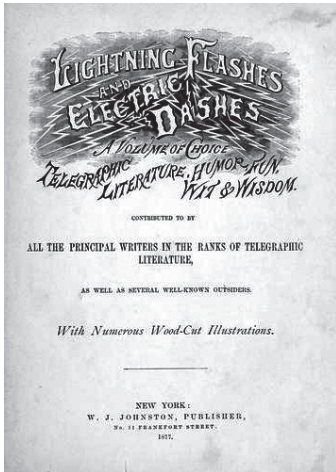
What unique experiences you have had Earl; we bid you a special welcome to the Morse Telegraph Club.





BOOK REVIEWS

Book reviews by J. Chris Hausler



In the latter half of the 19th century, the “mysterious technology” of the telegraph allowed women operators to communicate with unseen men operators without the traditional review of a father or brother. This whetted the general public’s appetite for what was then called the “telegraphic romance”.

In a previous column I discussed accounts of women in the telegraph office both factual and fictional. One fictional account I had been looking for in particular was *Wooing by Wire* as it was written by a women telegrapher, one Josie Schofield, who was outspoken in the “battle of the sexes” which took place in the pages of the telegraph periodicals of the time. I had been unsuccessful in this search until I tripped across a publication titled, “Lightning Flashes and Electric Dashes” recently digitized by Google Books. This book was originally published in 1882 by William J. Johnson, who was the editor of the telegraph periodical, *The Operator*. In it he compiled stories originally published in the telegraph periodicals written by telegraphers and others. *Wooing by Wire* was one of the stories in this volume, the third edition. The third edition was called for apparently due to wide interest and acclaim for the earlier editions outside of the ranks of the telegraph fraternity for which the earlier editions had been published. Thus, as the preface to the third edition states, the publication was reissued and rearranged, removing, sadly for this techie, technical terms and professional idioms which

might be unfamiliar to a general audience.

The story *Wooing by Wire* starts on page 93 of the third edition of the book. Josie Schofield, according to author Thomas C. Jepsen, was the only woman operator in the Toronto office of the Dominion Telegraph Company in 1875. A favorite quote of mine attributed to her by Jepsen is from the January 30, 1875 issue of the “Telegrapher”. It is one I frequently use in my presentations on telegraphy and is, “It is surely for better for us (women telegraphers) to be engaged in some useful business, earning our own living and making the most of our abilities, than to sit idly with folded hands waiting for the ‘coming man’, who is often so long in coming and worth so little when he arrives.” This frequently gets a laugh from the women in my audience and a somewhat delayed and restrained one from the men.

The story Josie writes tells of one Mildred Sunnidale, a self described “old maid.” A romance develops between her and another operator on the line, who confides to his friend that finding a wife by wire is probably as good as any as one can form a good estimate of a girl’s character by working her on the wire. Despite Josie’s outspokenness for independent women, her story has the couple eventually getting married as, after all, that was the desired happy ending in the Victorian Age.

I think you will enjoy the entire book, *Lightning Flashes and Electric Dashes* as it is full of stories of telegraphy and telegraphers as well as songs, poems and cartoons about the industry. Some sound quite factual and others are obviously fiction, but it was all written back in that time frame when the Morse Telegraph was the principle means of electric communication for both business and pleasure. It can be download for free, just enter the title of the book into Google and it will provide links to it, or it has recently become available in hard copy reprint from Amazon.



on the big and small screens of the 1960s and immediately recognizing it as something special.

"I fell in love with it there," he said. "I thought it was just about the neatest thing I had ever seen. It's just a lot of fun."

About five years ago, Buhrman said, the itch became too much to scratch. He finally set out to first learn Morse Code, which eventually led to years of work on one telegraph, and then another, and then a relay station and then the promise of more.

"Basically it was something I wanted to see if I could do," he said.

Buhrman said he was surprised how quickly he picked up the code, learning it in about half an hour and then able to click out words soon after. There are two Morse codes, he points out, the original developed as a series of dots and dashes and a newer "international" code, somewhat reworked to utilize radio waves, which would garble some letters from the original. The codes aren't based on any relationship to alphabetical order, but rather the frequency of use, with "e," being the most often used letter, represented as a single dot.

The nearly identical stations Buhrman has set up gleam of polished wood and brass, each with three tall historically accurate batteries. When American Press was still in business Buhrman said he and his coworkers would use their spare time to build his telegraph. The machines are capable of sending messages 80 miles without a relay station, though such a distance would require nearly 200 batteries.

"My supervisor said that as long as it didn't interfere with the work he didn't mind," said Buhrman. "A lot of people helped me build these."

Sitting at the table, the key, as the hammer-like device is called, forces the typing wrist to bend in a fashion that is not unlike sitting over a computer keyboard, just with a nearly two century gap in between. The key is more sensitive than one would think, with the mere hovering of a finger over the device seeming to make a click—a letter. And then a name, and then a sentence. It isn't a fast process, even for Buhrman, who can pick up on every subtly between the two codes and any errors a novice might experience behind the key for the first time.

"All that fast clicking you see in the movies, that's nonsense," said Buhrman, in a way dismissing the very medium that brought him to

the telegraph in the first place. Only one movie ever got it right, he said, "Western Union," starring late Orange County resident Randolph Scott.

As the first form of communication that could be measured in seconds rather than months, Buhrman credits the telegraph with keeping the English out of the Civil War, by President Lincoln apologizing for a naval mishap via an underwater, transatlantic cable. The wire would become wet and die soon after the message was delivered.

Now Buhrman takes his devices on the road for various reenactments of significant battles, a side job that's been ramped up over the past years with the marking of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War. He's traveled to Gettysburg and many battlefields across Virginia, offering a glimpse of the technology that aided in the Union's ultimate victory.

"It was definitely an issue of money," said Buhrman. "The South used the telegraph far less."

During reenactment events, Buhrman said he is surprised to see that most of the interest in his machines comes from children rather than adults.

"Some have never heard of a telegraph before and are really fascinated by it," he said. "When they try it out they pick it up really quickly because no one has ever told them it's hard or they can't do it. It's not a hard thing to learn, it's just like typing."

Behind the glass in a tall wooden cabinet are the future pieces of many more telegraph systems to be built by Buhrman, with the help of his son. These pieces are all original, from the golden age of telegraph communication, but polished and cleaned to look like the pieces Buhrman built from scratch. Next, he said, will be a device that records coded messages as they're received.

"It's another thing I just wanted to see if I could do," he said.

When taken out of the room and connected, the two telegraph machines can talk to one another, but communication in the Buhrman household is much more up to date. Rather than telegraphs, Buhrman and his family use early crank telephones wired and connection in each of the buildings.

"It's like an intercom system," said Buhrman, cranking the phone, the bells ringing loudly.

Buhrman will be in full uniform, with his telegraph on display during Aug. 18's Battle of Orange.

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 W0SZF, 211 East 4th 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: proy@shaw.ca

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 or order a 3 1/2" 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 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.

AVAILABLE: 2013 Railroad Calendar. The Inland Empire Railway Historical Society offers a stylish 2012 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.

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: 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: Book. Hubert Jewell, President of the Washington-Baltimore Chapter, offers us his biography 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. The price is only \$25.15 postage paid.

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

AVAILABLE: For all of you who enjoy our hobby and read interesting books on railroading, I am an old time telegrapher who also enjoys painting. I have produced fifteen different scenes pertaining to railroading, which have been turned into sturdy bookmarks. Each of these plastic coated colorful bookmarks is 4 1/2 inches long by 1 1/2 inches wide and each is decorated with a red or green (stop & go) ribbon. These sell at the bargain rate of two for \$1.00 or five for \$2.00, plus \$1.50 postage and handling. Amounts of ten or more, postage will be \$2.50 USA & CDA. Send your order to Kenneth W. Hine at PO Box 405, Coombs, BC V0R 1M0. For additional info contact Ken at whitefox29@shaw.ca.

AVAILABLE: A curved back resonator with 4 ohm sounder and PA can, wired for use. Also a Postal Telegraph Call Box, buzzer, strap key, sounders, relays, box relay and old Vibroplex keyer. I have no computer, so if you are interested in any of my items, please telephone me at 580 795-3724. Gene Wood of Madill, Oklahoma. (*Read Gene's sad story in the Letters to the Editor.*)

WANTED: Your favorite articles from past *Dots & Dashes*. Keith LeBaron challenges you to send these to me for re-printing in the current issues. Our readers will benefit. ~Jim

KEEP IN TOUCH...

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

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Culpeper, VA 22701
Telephone (540) 423-1014
imsohappy@juno.com

Please do not send address changes for Dots & 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.arnewline.org
www.usrepeaters.com
www.qth.com

NOTICES & INVITATIONS

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(Michigan-Ace Holman)

CANADIAN (HN) HUB
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WEINGARTENS & CLARK



This cartoon from The Washington Post was submitted to Dots & Dashes by Dr. Michael Rein, KA4JJD