



Dots&Dashes

What

Hath

God

Wrought

The Official Publication of the Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

Vol. 38, Issue No. 3 • Summer 2012

MTC WOWS THE CROWDS AGAIN

Members of the Morse Telegraph Club demonstrated the telegraph and answered questions from hundreds of visitors at the annual Dayton Hamvention in Ohio, which ran from Friday May 18th through Sunday May 20th. Attendance was up this year. Last year's attendance was 19,750 visitors. Due to excellent weather and an improved economy, this year's attendance was 24,483. This convention draws amateur radio operators and other interested folks from the United States, Canada, and from exotic places around the world.

Manning the main Morse Telegraph Club exhibit booth were Derek Cohn, Jim Wades, Chris Hausler and others. This is where most of the action was. A second booth, shared with the Italian Bengali telegraph key display, included

a clacking MTC exhibit with a telegraph sounder that visitors could monitor.

The huge Dayton Hamvention, held at the Hara arena in Dayton, Ohio, is always a great place to introduce visitors to the Morse Telegraph Club and to the original technology that started the electronics revolution. Just think: without the telegraph, there would have been no ham radio, no Internet, no telephones or computers.

Sample copies of *Dots & Dashes*, along with application forms were distributed at the MTC booth. President Jim Wades may mention the number of new members recruited in his President's Line.





Sidewire

Comments from the
Editor of *Dots & Dashes*

By **Jim Wilson**



Hurray; summer is back, with its promise of sunny days and telegraph demos. If you are able, I hope that you will participate in your chapter activities and will continue to write your interesting life stories to

share with our MTC readers. And remember to use your sun screen lotion every day.

The Dayton Hamvention has come and gone. Morse Telegraph Club members were there, telling the 25,000 people who attended about a marvelous invention called the telegraph. Thank you to our MTC members who spent time and their own money to participate at the Dayton Hamvention.

We are getting closer to the December release of the Steven Spielberg feature film, "Lincoln." Recall that the Morse Telegraph Club played an important role in this movie. MTC members provided valuable technical advice and some members were also characters in this upcoming film. So, put December on your calendars and get your popcorn ready!

President Jim Wades has some serious plans for starting a telegraph museum. As those plans develop, Jim will be telling us more about those museum plans. This is a revolutionary idea. But the devil is in the details.

This issue of *Dots & Dashes* has an above average amount of Chapter News. Thank you for sending in your descriptions of what your chapter is doing. And thank you for sending in your Letters to the Editor. Chapter news and letters add so much to each issue of *Dots & Dashes*. I always look forward to hearing from you.

President's Line

Jim Wades, President
Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.



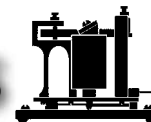
The Scrap Book

Like many MTC members, I occasionally scan the on-line auction site "E-bay" looking at the various telegraph related items and ephemera that is offered for sale. Recently, I came across some original photos of a Western Union relay office, which, it turns out, were ripped out of an old scrap book.

It appears that the seller had hoped to make more money by tearing out the photos and selling them individually rather than selling the scrap book as a single item. Taken out of context, the photos still have historical value. Yet, if retained in the context of the entire scrapbook, they would have had far greater value to future historians. Of course, the seller gave little thought to the historical value of the scrapbook and its potential cultural value as an artifact of the telegraph era during the first decade or two of the 20th Century.

Undoubtedly, many such sellers of historical items are primarily interested in the economic equation. They are interested in making a profit and the devil take the hindmost. While we can't change the economic trends that drive some people

Dots & Dashes



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Jim Wilson - Editor, *Dots & Dashes*

2742 Southern Hills Court • North Garden, VA 22959

Phone: 434-245-7041 • E-mail: jwilsonphoto@earthlink.net or ddeditor@hotmail.com

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

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Jim Wades
International President
301 Chippewa Street
Buchanan, MI 49107
Tel: 269-650-0215
jameswades@gmail.com

George J. Nixon, Jr.
International Vice President
4816 Ivy Leaf Lane
McKinney, TX 75070
Tel: 972-548-7205
n9ejs@mindspring.com

Lavina Shaw
Past President
#112 2357 Whyte Ave.
Port Coquitlam, B.C.
Canada V3C 2A3
Tel: 604-942-2184
LavinaShaw@shaw.ca

Roger Reinke
Former International
Secretary/Treasurer
5301 Neville Court
Alexandria, VA 22310
Tel: 703-971-4095
RWRinke@cox.net

President's Line, continued from previous page

to E-bay in an attempt to earn a living wage, we can take steps to protect a portion of our technological and cultural history. One such method of doing so is to pursue a museum project.

Over the past year, your MTC President has been developing a detailed plan designed to start a telegraph museum. The goal is to develop an approach, which will allow MTC to incrementally establish a viable, stable museum organization without risk to the MTC treasury. This plan will be submitted to the Board of Directors later this summer for review, modification, and due consideration.

MTC has already received some support for a museum project. Steven Spielberg was kind enough to donate to MTC some of furnishing utilized in the design and construction of a set for his upcoming film entitled "Lincoln." Essentially, MTC is now in possession of two large telegraph relay office tables, which are excellent replicas of those utilized in Western Union relay offices in the era from 1880 to 1910. Each of these tables was custom designed and constructed based on early drawings and photographs.

Your MTC President made arrangements to have the tables shipped to a storage warehouse near his home. Discounted freight service was donated by "Hot Line Freight." The City of Buchanan, Michigan was also kind enough to provide a secure storage location so they would be safe until ready to be used. City DPW employees volunteered their time to off-load the furniture and move it into storage.

More details on the proposal will be provided in the next issue of *Dots & Dashes*. It is hoped that our MTC membership will find the plan to be innovative, carefully measured, and effective. In the meantime, don't hesitate to offer your own insights and ideas, support, or opposition to your International President. We are interested in everyone's input.

Dayton Hamvention

This year's Dayton Hamvention was another big success. Interest was greater than ever, and we signed up ten new MTC members. This year, we spent little time on the wire. Despite having four primary volunteers (and a few others who assisted now and then), we simply didn't have sufficient staff to answer questions, visit with the crowd and operate. The instruments were typically left operating on the news wire for the duration.

Next year, we could use several additional volunteers. This would allow us to not only do a bit more, but it would also give our core group of organizers a rest now and then. Additionally, we may be expanding to two or more booths to accommodate

President's Line continued on page 7

☛ 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 September 30th, with submission deadline three weeks prior to that date.

THE ORDEAL OF THE SEALING SHIP VIKING

*This true story was written for Dots & Dashes readers
by MTC member Pat Kelly of Sidney, British Columbia.*

Varick Frissell was an American, born in New York in 1903 of a well-to-do family. He became interested in the film industry when just out of college. In 1921 he happened to hear a lecture given by Dr. Wilfred Grenfell, whose hospital-missionary work in Labrador had brought him world renown. Soon Frissell was on his way north and on arrival in Labrador, volunteered to drive dog team in winter and spend the summer working on the hospital boat Strathcona.

Later, with companion James Hillier, he explored the Hamilton River and filmed the magnificent waterfalls there (now known as Churchill River and Falls). Another river called the Unknown River was also thoroughly examined and renamed the Grenfell River. Through his film, *The Lure of Labrador* released in 1926 and the films of his exploring adventures, he was elected to membership in the prestigious Royal Geographical Society.

In 1927 he took part in, and made a much acclaimed film about the annual seal hunt, on board the Canadian Government ship *SS Beothic*. Frissell soon formed his own film company called *The Newfoundland and Labrador Film Company* and in partnership with *Paramount Pictures*, embarked on the making of yet another cinema work to be called "White Thunder." The Captain of the ship was the famed Newfoundland sailor and navigator, Bob Bartlett, and the Newfoundland/Labrador seal hunt was accordingly well documented. It was also the first sound film made in Canada and was taken in the Grand Banks area and had its first showing in St. John's, Newfoundland on March 5th, 1931. Frissell and *Paramount* were not entirely satisfied with the results and decided to add more scenes from the Labrador and Newfoundland ice fields.

Shortly after the film's showing, Frissell chartered a sealing ship called the *Viking*, and accompanied by cinema photographer A. E. Penrod, and assistant H. Sargent, left St. John's on March 9th, 1931 to record the actual seal hunt.

The *Viking* was a wooden sailing ship launched in Norway in 1882. It was fitted with a 90-HP engine. The ship had spent a number of years hunting seals in Greenland waters. At one time, the Norwegian

explorer, Fridtjof Nansen, had used the vessel on an arctic expedition. *Viking* was purchased by *Bowring Bros* of Newfoundland in 1904 and sailed on sealing hunts under the command of Captain William Bartlett, father of Bob Bartlett, and had accommodation for some 276 men.

By 1931 the ship was under command of Abraham Kean. By March 15th the vessel was surrounded by ice and immovable at White Bay near the Horse islands (known also as St. Barbe's Islands). These small islands lie some miles off the Baie Verte peninsula on the east coast of Newfoundland and consist of two small rocky islets, with a population at that time of about 200. There was also a government wireless station on the easternmost island, manned by operator Otis Bartlett. (Bartlett is a formidable name among the seafaring fraternity of Newfoundland). Due to economic difficulties, most of the people of the Horse islands have since been removed to the nearby village of La Scie on the mainland.

I may remark that sealing vessels and other ships working in the ice floes carried a fair quantity of dynamite, powder and blasting equipment and used it to free the ship when it was locked in ice.

On board the ship sometime after about 7 pm, crew and film personnel were going about their various duties. Many of the off duty men were asleep in their bunks while other sat at the mess table and talked. Frissell himself was busy making a sign warning of the danger of smoking near the powder and dynamite carried aboard. He was afraid that some careless smoker would ignite the explosives and rockets of which there was a goodly supply on board. Clayton King, the vessel's wireless operator, went to the radio room to copy weather forecasts and to check for messages. He finished his work, put his batteries on charge and after delivering messages to the Captain's room, went into the saloon to chat with Frissell and others. Captain Kean had turned in, after telling the men that the vessel would remain in the ice for the night and try to get free next day.

Suddenly the ship lurched steeply to one side throwing men away from the mess tables and on to the deck. Immediately after, there was a horrendous

explosion that destroyed most of the stern of the ship, followed by other heavier detonations that caused a raging fire up forward.

Several had been killed outright and many were seriously injured. Those able to move, raced for the deck which was afire fore and aft. Frissell, and his assisant, A.G. Penrod and the ship`s surgeon, Dr. Roach, were among those killed, along with Frissell`s devoted Newfoundland dog, Cabot. Tier after tier of sleeping men down in the fo`cse, tired after the days exertions, were victims of the terrific blast. Some managed to get clear although further explosions occurred, covering the vessel in a sheet of flame which soared up the masts and burned all in its path. Wireless operator King found himself trapped in the saloon with wreckage jamming his legs so that he could not move. Fear of being overtaken by the advancing fire gave him renewed strength and he somehow managed to crawl painfully to what was left of the stern of the ship.

Realizing that the vessel was sinking, he finally got overboard and with help from other survivors found refuge on an ice pan. Many others joined him, some more or less hurt, but all no doubt in shock. Men who were at least ambulatory, although injured, started across the ice to get help from Horse Island. Words cannot describe the awful suffering of those men who had so far survived and were in the icy waters or adrift on ice floes, many horribly wounded. Suffice it to say that several died that night in the numbing cold and wet.

On the island, many families were just strolling home from the Sunday evening church service when they were alarmed by the ground shaking and hearing a dull roar. Some believed it to be an earthquake, but almost immediately they saw smoke and flames rising from a vessel far offshore in the ice. They ran to the wireless station to alert operator Bartlett, who, having felt the blast as well, and seeing smoke and flames from a vessel afire, hastily sent the following message to the Minister of Marine in St. John`s:

At nine o`clock last night heard terrible explosion. Early this morning the burning wreckage of a steamer was sighted about eight miles east of here. Also saw men travelling on ice towards the island. Men reported about twenty dead. Signed Otis Bartlett.

Opr. Horse Islands

Subsequent messages from the wireless station to the Ministry revealed more details as they became known, including weather, ice conditions, number of men arriving on the island etc., Bartlett learned that the navigator, doctor, wireless operator, cook and

steward were missing, and that the captain was badly injured.

The Ministry immediately ordered the entire sealing fleet to the scene and advised that the deep sea salvage tug Foundation Franklin carrying Dr. Blackler and Nurse Bartlett and that the steamer SS Sagona with Drs. Paterson, Moores, Martin and Nurses Paton and Berrigan, were preparing to sail, equipped with medical and clothing supplies and enough food for one hundred and twenty men for fifteen days. In order to keep continuous wireless watch, the Sagona carried two wireless operators

Meanwhile King and several others had found a small bit of wreckage from the stern of the vessel drifting nearby and with much difficulty were able to crawl on to it. Some had severe burns, and an icy wind sweeping down from cold North Atlantic waters caused much suffering. After being reported missing, Operator King, Film Asst. Sargent and the Navigator, Kennedy, were finally rescued by the SS Sagona after over sixty five hours on the ice and drifting wreckage. They had drifted twenty two miles from the ship`s original position. Eight days passed before the Sagona could reach St. John`s and by then Kennedy had died of his injuries. All the injured were taken to the hospital where doctors and nurses worked around the clock to tend the sufferers. Sadly, not all survived.

In New York, on March 18th, Dr. Frissell, father of Varick Frissell, in the hope that his son was still alive, immediately chartered a Sikorsky aeroplane piloted by noted aviator Bernt Balchen, long experienced in Arctic flying, to visit the disaster scene and do an aerial search of the area.. As far as known, he did not find any survivors. It was rumoured also that some film companies tried to charter planes to the Horse Islands to search for those missing, but plane owners flatly rejected the idea, contending that the danger outweighed the supposed gain.

Operator King had gangrene so far advanced that it was necessary to amputate both legs near the knee. Several days passed before the medical personnel were satisfied that he would recover. He was discharged from hospital on July 9th, 1931. Dr. L.E. Keegan, a prominent Newfoundland surgeon who, along with other medical staff, conducted this and other operations, later wrote a forward to Clayton King`s excellent book: "The Viking`s last Cruise" (1936). (From this volume, along with other accounts of the tragedy, and copies obtained of some of the ensuing wireless traffic, much of this narrative is derived.) King himself, credits his recovery to the excellent care given by the medical staff on the vessel

The Ordeal of the Sealing Viking Ship continued from previous page

Sagona and in the hospital at St. John`s. He also stated that he would never have survived, were it not for the assistance and constant care given him while adrift on the ice floe, by film assistant Sargent and Navigator Kennedy, themselves being in dire peril.

Excerpts from the St. John`s Daily News gave the following details:

On Horse Island, that evening, Operator Bartlett saw many men approaching the island over the ice. Many were obviously hurt and were being helped along by their mates. The ice conditions were bad, a heavy sea was running and winds were blowing offshore.

Not an encouraging prospect.. Sometime later that evening a group of fifty or more survivors landed on the island. They told of the explosion that wrecked the ship and of the ensuing flames. The fires were still burning. Being cold and exhausted and in shock, they were unable to give a coherent account of the disaster. Approximately one hundred and eighteen men arrived on the island after a terrible journey over the ice. The residents gave all the aid they could but, not surprisingly, there was insufficient food for that number of men and little or no medical supplies were available there. (Compensation was to be given to the Horse Island residents for the food and supplies they had extended to the shipwrecked men). It was estimated at this time that there were about twenty dead with an unknown number injured. About 140 men were on board at the time of the blast as far as known. This included two young stowaways who were discovered by the wireless operator after the ship was well clear of harbour. It was expected to take about two days for rescue ships to arrive. The government in St. John`s was anxious to obtain the details of the circumstances of the accident and wirelessman Bartlett was kept busy collecting and passing on to shore authorities as much information as could be obtained from the dazed and injured survivors. He was later credited with doing a superb job of keeping both the authorities and rescue ships informed.

Many more vessels were ordered to go the area of the Viking`s sinking and aid in a search for survivors.. A few men were rescued from drifting ice floes and taken to hospital in the capital as quickly as conditions allowed.

This was the first serious Newfoundland sea disaster in nearly twenty years. Back in March, 1914, the sealing steamer Newfoundland lost seventy eight men frozen to death in a blizzard on the ice. And the SS Southern Cross in the same month, foundered en

route home loaded with seal skins, with the loss of one hundred seventy three men. Sealing was a dangerous occupation.

In addition to the rescue ships mentioned before, the steamers Beothic, Ungava, Eagle, Neptune, Prospero and Imogene all steamed toward the Horse islands vicinity and scoured the area for possible survivors.

In St. John`s, it was announced by the Irish Benevolent Society that the annual St. Patrick`s Day parade would be cancelled as an expression of sorrow and sympathy for the lost and injured men and their families. Flags were flown at half mast throughout the city as well as island wide.

Well attended church services were held in St. John`s and across the colony. His Excellency, the Governor, as well as City and Government officials also paid their respects.

Mention must also be made of the local Boy Scouts organization who, as rescuing vessels arrived at St. John`s wharves with the ill and injured, formed an ambulance corps and gave excellent service in aiding the survivors. In addition, a Disaster Relief Fund was quickly formed and we can surmise that it was well subscribed to.

News of the disaster was slow in coming to many isolated and lonely communities along the rocky coast. On March 17th, a number of Boy Scouts of the 9th St. John`s Troop were on a hike to the village of Torbay some miles north of the capital and the leader took with him a couple of copies of a current newspaper. The news was eagerly devoured and discussed by the residents who, until then, had heard nothing of the Viking episode.

Incidentally, Varick Frissell`s father, Dr. Lewis Frissell, was in his younger days a well known mountaineer making several historical climbs in the Canadian Rockies.

Messages of condolence and heartfelt sympathy for the victims, now numbering twenty seven, and their families were received from Great Britain, Canada and the United States as well as from the government and people of the nearby French owned islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon and many other countries.

As far as known, the exact cause of the explosion was never determined, although it was alleged that in addition to the dynamite and powder, the ship possessed a stock of outdated and potentially unsafe flares on board.

This, then, is the story of a most tragic chapter in the lives of a proud and brave seafaring people and we can be certain that this event will always be part of the history of Newfoundland, now our sister province.

additional telecommunications exhibits! More on this as next year's event approaches.

Use the Wire!

On another note; I would like to encourage MTC members to use the wire. Ed Trump and I are often connected to MorseKOB Wire 11 throughout the day. Yet, we rarely hear activity.

There was a time when MTC members paid a monthly tariff to the Bell System simply to have a private Morse Wire serving a Chapter. Today, one can be connected to a permanent "virtual" telegraph circuit 24 hours per day with the only cost being that of an Internet connection. Let's take advantage of this incredibly valuable resource. We need to develop a cadre of new Morse operators. After all, none of us regulars are getting any younger. There is also activity on Wires 1 and 2, for those that are newer to MorseKOB. Wouldn't it be nice to have a full-time Morse circuit in your home or office!

Edmonton Chapter

While visiting in Edmonton, Alberta, I had the pleasure to meet with a dozen or so Edmonton Chapter members for an evening of pleasant conversation over dinner. I had a wonderful time not only discussing telegraphy, but also the current state of the rail industry in the US and Canada. George Campbell was also nice enough to provide me with a copy of his book "Good Night Old Man," which I read on the flight back to the States. I strongly recommend this book to MTC members. George does an excellent job of conveying the human side of the telegraph industry, which provides a nice balance to so many historical works, which seem to concentrate only on technology or instruments.

My thanks to the members of the Edmonton Chapter for their gracious hospitality. I certainly felt "at home."

73,
Jim
WB&SIW

PITTSBURG HERE I COME!

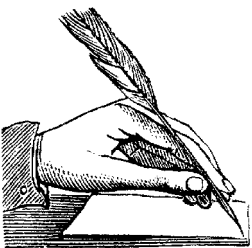
This fun, real life story, was written for us and sent in for Dots & Dashes readers by MTC member Eugene Wood of Madill, Oklahoma.

I learned telegraphy and station work from my father, who was a Missouri Pacific Railroad agent-telegrapher in Towanda, Kansas. It had been our aim to have me go to work for the MoPac as soon as I turned 18, so instead of going to college after high school, I continued to fine tune my railroad skills. I had actually worked a day as operator when the agent at the next town wanted a day off and got permission from the Superintendent to let me work, the agent paying me and not putting me on the payroll.

But the shock came when I went to Wichita to hire out and was told that they weren't hiring anyone less than 19 years old. We visited a Pipeline Office where we heard the telegrapher was about to retire and I might possibly get a job there. But I found out that the job included being a PBX operator and I didn't want that. My Dad didn't object, so we went home and Dad contracted the ORT to see if they

knew of any RR that might hire me. In a few days, I got a letter from the B&O RR saying they would hire me if I went to Pittsburg and broke in on some towers. I didn't think much of the offer. Pittsburg at that time was known as the most air polluted city in the United States, maybe in the world. Also, I didn't know much anything about towers and I was a small town boy from "way back." But, I decided to go; I then waited for them to send me a pass.

My Dad made a trip on Saturday to Claremore, Oklahoma to visit the Frisco depot, where operator John Dickerson told him the Frisco RR was hiring operators at age 18. This was because the war time business had created a lot of new jobs so I would most likely get a regular job quickly. Boy was I glad to get that news! I sent the pass back and took the next train to Tulsa, going right to work. Lucky me! I worked for the Frisco for 41 years and 3 months, taking early retirement in 1983.



Letters to the Editor

April 7th

In the 1950's and early 1960's air raid shelters were built near the railroad stations in many towns and villages across Canada. They were called "diefenbunkers" after our Prime Minister, John Diefenbaker. This was during the cold war and these shelters were to protect people from a nuclear bomb and radiation. This picture was taken of the shelter at Sifton, MB with my father, Willard McPhedrain, standing in the doorway. For the life of me, I don't know why they would bomb Sifton, with a population of approximately 250.

*Laina Shaw
Former MTC International President*



April 11th

I think you and our fellow members might be interested in a situation that developed while I was assigned as Agent/Telegrapher at Littlefork, Minnesota on the Northern Pacific Railway in the mid 1950's.

One of my duties every morning was to meet the daily passenger train operating from Saint Paul to International Falls, and to help unload any baggage and Railway Express traffic. It was important that the train not be delayed, and so the unloading had to be efficient and speedy.

One morning I prepared the Railway Express wagons by spotting them on the platform where the train normally stopped. The engineer made a great spot right in front of the Express cart. The door to the express car

slid open, and the messenger said to me, "What do you want to do with this mule?" There stood a mule with a rope around its neck. Not wanting to delay the train, I said, "Well, I guess we will have to put it on the Express cart," which stood about three feet above the platform.

So, we walked the mule into the cart, the door closed on the Express car, and away went Train #11. That left me with a live mule on a cart three feet off the ground, and wondering how in the world I was going to get that animal down on the platform without breaking its leg (or worse).

Just about that time, I spotted the Section Foreman walking down the track toward the Depot. I shouted, "Henry, get down here and help me get this animal down off the platform." Henry laughed all the way to the Depot; said it was the funniest thing he had ever seen. Then he proceeded to round up some planks and we were able to get the animal down safe and sound.

I telephoned the consignee, a local farmer, and reported that I had a mule for him. He responded by saying he would be right in to get the animal.

When he arrived, I asked him how he came to ship the mule in the manner that he did. He explained that he had a young daughter who raised a heifer, and when it came time to butcher, his daughter was devastated. He said he told her if she would allow him to dispose of the heifer, he would acquire some other animal for her to raise. He promised that the animal would be hers alone and would NEVER be slaughtered.

So, out came the Montgomery Ward's catalog, and they found they could buy a mule from MW. They had the option of having it shipped "crated or uncrated." Since it was a little less costly to have the mule shipped "uncreated," that was the way it was ordered.

I guess the lesson I learned was, "When you are working with Railway Express shipments, be prepared for the unexpected."

*Sincerely,
Bob Montbriand
Naples, Florida*

April 13th

I always use the stairway hand rail and we all are an important link in the chain of life. [These are references to previous *Dots & Dashes* "secret coded messages"].

Our chapter guy, George Kulage, worked 40 plus years as a station agent and telegraph operator for the Wabash Railroad. George offers these calls for the canon ball run north from Saint Louis:

Litchfield, IL FH
Taylorville, IL VI
Decatur, IL XD
Danville, IL DA
Lafayette, IN VA
Logansport, IN FH
Fort Wayne, IN FD
Detroit, MI MX MD & RH

I hope to soon send you photographs and a story about our new permanent telegraph display in the new Civil War exhibit at the National Museum of Transportation here in Saint Louis County, MO. Also, today is the anniversary of the start of the Civil War.

*73 & 30 & NM,
William
BS Office
MTC Ollie Blackburn Chapter*

April 18th

Here are a couple of corrections to items in the recent *Dots & Dashes*.

Page 16 obituary: The correct spelling of that last name is HULSEY. We were both in the DF Lone Star chapter.

Page 7 *Morse Code 101*: I think several of the bottom items are wrong. I believe the semi-colon was SI [dit dit dit space dit dit]. I believe the quotation was incorrect, as was the QN beginning quote and the QY ending quote. The parenthesis was also PN for beginning parenthesis and PY for ending parenthesis. Hey, I'm 88 years old with a broken hip, so maybe I don't remember so well!

*Eugene Wood
Madill, Oklahoma.*

April 18th

I thought I might as well add my e-mail to the bunch that has already notified you about the error that was made in comparing the letter "Q" Morse/International.

*Fred Becker
MW Chapter
Wisconsin*

April 18th

This is a funny story. The year was 1941. I was learning telegraph and had gotten pretty good at it because I had been doing most of the telegraph work for an old guy on the second trick at New Lisbon, Wisconsin. New Lisbon was the start of the Milwaukee Railroad branch line to Minocqua, Wisconsin, a distance of 163 miles. They had a Dispatchers office at Wausau with a chef dispatcher. This was a rather busy line at that time, with several passenger trains and a number of freight trains.

I was only 17 years of age and the railroad would not hire me until I was 18, in March 1942. A friend of mine haired out on this line and was working extra jobs. He had helped me learn telegraph and was relieving the agent/operator at a place called Rudolph, a berg of about 150 people. I hopped on a passenger train at New Lisbon and got off at Rudolph to spend a day with my friend. There wasn't much to do in a berg of only 150, so we spent most of the time in the depot after working hours.

A local lad of about 18 or 19 stopped in and had a car, so we told him we would give him five bucks to take us to Stevens Point, Wisconsin, a town of about 15,000, where the action was. Nope, he wouldn't do it, so my friend said let's play blackjack and the lad agreed. I had been playing with a wire that wasn't being used. Standing behind the lad, I telegraphed the cards the lad had in his hand, to my friend. It wasn't long before my friend had the lad's five bucks.

But to be honest, we told the lad we would give him back his five bucks if he would take us to Stevens Point. This time, he agreed.

*Fred Becker
MW Chapter*

April 21st

I enjoyed the spring issue of *Dots & Dashes* and am glad the stolen Morse plaque found its way back home. That was good work on the part of all concerned!

I knew Vince Thompson minimally and met him once when I was in Phoenix. I bought an item from him once. We were both physicians and I remember chatting with him on medical issues, both bad mouthing HMO's and such. I think Vince was a respected gynecologic-oncologic surgeon. He was also an active ham operator and was a participant on a few DXpeditions that I knew about.

I agree with the assessment. He needed a twelve step program to deal with his telegraph equipment addiction. I think he was an honorable guy who had a sickness. I heard from others who visited Vincent his home in Phoenix that it was like a warehouse stuffed wall-to-ceiling with unopened boxes containing telegraph items

Letters to the Editor, continued from previous page

that he had purchased on eBay.

As best as I can tell, several people in the Phoenix area are currently unloading his stuff. Dave Hollander, N7RX told me that Vince had countless thousands of telegraph items, including many duplicate junky items such as dozens of those cheap Calrad buzzer-ley combinations from the 1960's. It really was a sickness.

A number of years back, I had some duplicate labels made for my Telegraph Apparatus Corporation bugs that all seemed to be missing their labels. The printer mistakenly made 25 labels rather than 5, so I had extras. Vince bought 10 of them. I'm glad that Vince's Vietnamese girlfriend acted honorably.

On a separate topic, the Spring 2012 issue has a comparison of American Landline Morse with the International Morse code (*Morse Code 101*, page 7). The International code letter for "Q" is incorrect as listed, and "parenthesis" s spelled incorrectly.

*Best 73,
Dave Pennes
WA3LKN
dpennes@hotmail.com*

April 21st

Regarding Ed Trump's comment about how few of us are left that really know the code operations, one of the things he mentioned was telegraph equipment possibly being donated to museums as a method of preservation. Ed used a very telling statement: "subject to cultural agenda." I like that term. It sure hits the subject on the head.

I asked two museum curators about people donating items to a museum. I said, "What do you do as far as indefinite storage of items that are donated to your museum? Do you keep them forever?"

The answer was that a museum will display items that are of interest to their customer until a time in which the items are no longer interesting enough to keep on display. These items are then placed in a storage area. Then I asked what happens to the items when they are no longer kept in storage. The two museum curators responded that at least two things could happen: 1) if the person or organization who donated the items was no longer available, the items would be donated to another organization or could be sold to any interested party. Or 2) the items would be disposed of as the museum saw fit (thrown away).

Present curators might consider items worthy of preservation whereas their successors or Boards might not value the item as worthy.

I asked if there were legal ways to ensure the

preservation of the objects for an undesignated length of time. Their answer was NO. If a person were to pursue a legally binding agreement, it would cost a great deal to the presenter (not the museum), and it would take a bonded third party to ensure all wishes of both parties were carried out. But due to the complexities, it seems not worth the trouble.

Obviously, there are certain museums around the world that do preserve items "forever," but the items are considered VERY VALUABLE. The Hope diamond, the Constitution, etc. would be valuable, but not telegraph equipment.

Thus, MTC members need to be aware of the fact that just because they donate something to a museum, does not mean it will be preserved forever.

I have only talked to two unrelated museums about this subject, and "the gavel has not hit the table" on this subject for a long time. But this is something to think about before believing that your telegraph equipment will be kept somewhere forever, even if the items are considered to be historical and likely preserved for future generations.

I welcome comments by other MTC members on this topic.

*For what it's worth,
Boyd Ferrell*

April 27th

I have to take exception to some of the characters used for punctuation in Morse Code 101 on Page 7 of the Spring issue of *D&D*. In particular, the codes shown for Semi-colon, quotations, and parenthesis do not appear to be correct and are not the ones I used as a Operator for the Erie RR back in the 1950's and 1960's. I am attaching copies of the code pages for both American Morse and Continental Morse which came with my Instructograph, which I believe contain the proper symbols. What was printed in *D&D* does not agree with either code. You might also want to check Lewis Coe's book titled, *The Telegraph*, printed in 1911. The symbols listed there also agree with the ones published in the Instructograph manual.

*Best Regards,
Tom Bookman
President
FX Chapter*

(See Tom's Instructograph codes in the next issue ~Editor Jim)

May 11th

Mother and I had a wonderful time visiting the beautiful Chinese and Japanese gardens at the Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens. While

at the Chinese Gardens, I noticed the QR codes and decided to check it out. It was amazing! Just get your phone device and Scan the code (You must have a QR reader application on your cell phone). After your device scans the QR code, you may listen to a short and very informative talk on what you are looking at. It is well worth your effort to SCAN or QR codes in the in the Chinese Garden exhibit (or for that matter ANY exhibit you're at and what more information on what you are looking at).

There was a special train exhibit, "Visions of Empire" (The Quest for a Railroad Across America 1840-1880). The very special rail exhibit is a must do for all rail fans (people who love trains). The Morse Telegraph Club helped with the Telegraph exhibit. One of our local members loaned some of her telegraph equipment for this show. The exhibit room for the telegraph was awesome. I wished that I could share the images with you all; however, no cameras were allowed to shoot images at this exhibit, especially inside the telegraph exhibit area.

I will be writing an article for *Dots & Dashes* titled "Visions of Empire." I hope the museum will send me an image of the exhibit room since I was not allowed to take any pictures.

Cathy Lynn Stanfill
Secretary-Treasurer
California SQ Chapter

(See Cathy's photos on www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1463386407)

May 31st

I have been sending Bruce Harvey of the CNR some history stories which include a lot of *Order of Railroad Telegraph History*. Bruce has published some of these railroad stories on a blog called *Caboose Coffee*. The web address is caboosecoffee.blogspot.com.

Gren Schrader
Oakville, Ontario

June 9th

What a great publication is *D&D*, editorially wise as well as graphically excellent!

I entered the world of news gathering and distribution from a different direction than Charles S. Fitch, (page 5 of the Spring 2012 issue.) In the 1960's, with the expansion of telephone technology and cheaper long distance rates, it became apparent that the commercial telegram was on its way out. Canada's version of Western Union was the Canadian National Telegraph Company (CNT) and the Canadian Pacific Telegraph (CPT), subsidiaries of each railway. Medium and large

sized cities, where both companies operated, negotiated the closing of their downtown offices of one or the other – maybe by flipping a coin.

At the time I joined the Commercial Telegraphers Union (CTU) as a teleprinter operator for CNT, I was only 15 years old, apparently the youngest member of that union at that time. Having low seniority, I started looking around for new work. Our union rep suggested trying the news gathering and distribution organization called the Canadian Press (CP). It connected with the Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI) in the United States. I was hired in late 1962, joining some operators who were also former CNT and former CPT employees.

In addition to serving member newspapers from across Canada, there is a subsidiary called Broadcast News (BN), which sends edited-for-broadcasting news. (There was a Morse wire position, complete with a mill (typewriter), at the main news distribution centre in Toronto, but was used only occasionally by some of their operators who were Morse proficient from remote locations such as ball parks, hockey rinks, etc.) .

I was sending news on the BN wire about noon hour on November 22nd, 1963, when there was a five-bell signal coming from the AP wire near me. The editor jumped out of his seat and said, "Wow." He tore off the sheet of paper from the teleprinter (probably a Teletype Corporation machine), with the information and told me to stop sending some routine type news, then to begin typing on the teleprinter network: "BULLETIN – Dallas, Texas, November 22 (AP) – President Kennedy has been shot; (more)" Of course, except for continuing news articles like this, most articles ended with "30," meaning there is no more news to follow.

So my part in dealing with this news was informing all the radio and TV stations in Canada. The rest is history.

Author Charles Fitch mentions a Philadelphia radio station as KYW (an AM radio station). I always thought call letters for radio or TV stations east of the Mississippi started with the letter "W" and stations west of the Mississippi started with "K."

In Canada, all call letters begin with "C," with one exception. VOCM, a long time station in Saint John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. That province joined Canada in 1949 and kept their traditional call letters.

73,
Ken Andrews
Maple Leaf Chapter
Toronto, Ontario
kena@mycybernet.net

CHAPTER NEWS

Ollie Blackburn AT Chapter

The five year development, incorporating the significant of telegraphy with the development of American railroads, came together during the second week of April, 2012. Events commemorated the start of the Civil War on April 12, 1861, and the end of the Civil War on April 9, 1865 and the assassination of President Lincoln on April 14, 1865. A special Grand Opening with a large auto show, Civil War Project display and Morse telegraph demonstrations at our new permanent info office desk were part of the grand opening. The National Transport Museum Association is located in Kirkwood, MO in Saint Louis County. Our display is set up inside the Barretts Station Education Depot; the station sign is "BS." The office equipment is automatic and functions continuously. Special demonstrations were conducted by members of the MTC Ollie Blackburn AT Chapter.



Previous work involved coordination during Legacy Days, teaching children how to send their names in Morse code and then presenting them with an impressive certificate to take home with them. Our traditional "Fuzzy Face" handout continues also to be available as a museum pass out to all visitors at the telegraph desk.

Members of the Civil War Project committee were:

Mrs. Jane Saunders,
Co-chair & TMA board member

Mrs. Kristen Valenti,
Co-chair and TMA staff

Mrs. McEachern,
Co-chair & TMA Executive Director

Dr. Joyce Phillips,

Co-Chair and board member

Mr. E.R. Eastin,

Legacy Coordinator & TMA board member

*73 from the DS office,
30, & NM,
William Eggelston*

Washington-Baltimore WA Chapter

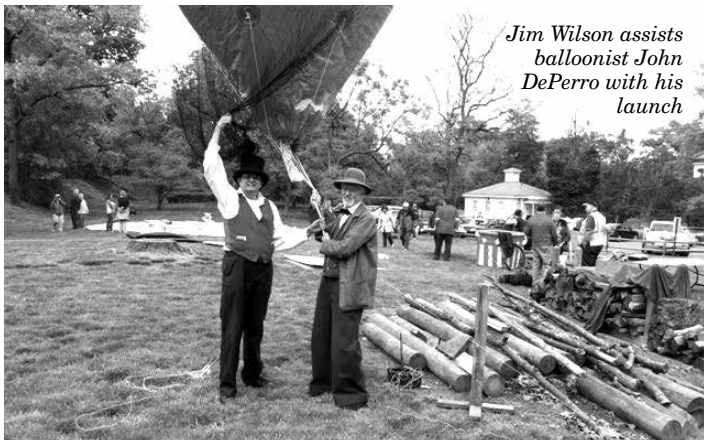
MTC members celebrated Morse day again this year at the Railway Mail Service Library in Boyce, Virginia in what has become an annual event. MTC member Frank Scheer is the curator of the library, which is located in the former Boyce N&W station, originally built in 1913. This is a rather pretentious station for the small town of Boyce, but apparently the local residents were dissatisfied with the railroad's plans for a new station around 1910, so they provided the land and funds to support the construction of a station more to their liking. The resulting construction is masonry, 142 feet long and 26 feet wide.

Mike Cizek and I [Chris] drove to Boyce from Mike's place early Morse Day morning to set up the telegraph apparatus. Mike also had ATCSmon on his computer, a program which shows a recreation of a dispatchers "CTC display" for a selected rail line and showing train activity in real time.

The rail line past the station is still an active Norfolk southern freight line. We were blessed with several passing trains that day, the arrival of which we were able to predict by watching the ATCSmon display. At one time, the crossing protection gates near the station did not come up after the passing of a train. So the next rain stopped right in front of the station so the crew could check and flag the crossing. Following trains approached slowly, prepared to stop, adding to the show. But the gates operated flawlessly from then on. As each train passed, operator Cizek OS'ed them to the MorseKOB wire.

This event had been advertized to railfans as well as to the telegraph community. Railway mail service as well as general railfans showed up, some coming from as far away as North Carolina. This gave us an opportunity to introduce the wonders of Mr. Morse's invention to quite a number of people. I did a brief but brisk business in handing out MTC brochures. I also think we had more people on "the wire," both wires 2 and 11, this year than last. A lot of interest was shown by the visitors. One local man who stopped in commented that as a child he had stood outside the bay window and remembered hearing the clicking of the telegraph sounders.

CHAPTER NEWS *continued*



*Jim Wilson assists
balloonist John
DePerro with his
launch*

To round out the festivities, Frank provided hot dogs, hamburgers with buns and the usual condiments, not to mention cold sodas. Bob Cohen served as grill master. So we had a wonderful picnic lunch and the threatened rain held off until we were packed up and ready to leave late that afternoon. All in all, this was a pleasant celebration of Mr. Morse's 221st birthday (Born April 27, 1791).

Both last year and this year, I tried to persuade a mutual friend of Frank's and mine, a recently retired railroader living in Pennsylvania, to come to Morse Day at Boyce. Over the years, he has provided me and other MTC members with lists of telegraph office calls, and has quite a collection of railroad lighting and other artifacts. Although I thought I had his commitment this year, he pleaded family obligation and did not come. Frank decided to make sure this fellow has no excuse next year. Frank sent him the following order: ***

Thanks to J. Chris Hausler for this WA Chapter news report

Also on Morse Day, several members of the WA chapter served at the Living History Day



*Hubert Jewell
and his
daughter Cindy
Galyen answer
questions about
telegraphy*

commemorating the Civil War at Fort Ward Park in Alexandria, Virginia. Hubert Jewell, WA Chapter President, and his daughter Cindy Galyen, WA International Secretary-Treasurer, and your editor, Jim Wilson, demonstrated telegraphy and answered numerous questions asked by the hundreds of folks who attended this well advertized event. While rain was a constant threat, this event was a grand success in introducing the public to the Morse Telegraph Club and the significance of the telegraph to the development of the United States and Canada.

Milwaukee/Madison MW Chapter

The "4000 Foundation" announces plans for "Rail Fair" to be held Saturday, July 21, 1012 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Copeland Park in La Crosse, Wisconsin. Since 1991, the Rail Fair has grown to become one of the premier summer railroad events in the Mid-West. The Rail Fair hosts vendors from six states, offering 200 tables of railroad related merchandise. The La Crosse Short Line Railroad display will be open for guided tours. For a small donation, the big steam engine whistle can be blown. Several railroad exhibits and displays will also be offered, including a working telegraph display, where visitors can send and receive telegraph messages to and from Grand Crossing Tower. Canadian Pacific Railway and BNSF Railway are again promising to provide modern locomotives for public tours at their respective facilities.

Admission to Rail Fair is only \$5. Children under age 12 are free when accompanied by an adult. All proceeds from this event are used to maintain and restore the La Crosse Short Line Railroad display. Established in 1989, the 4000 Foundation is a non-profit organization. Their website is www.4000foundation.com.

Thanks to Bob Pluntz, Secretary-Treasurer of the MW chapter for this interesting report.

Florida FX Chapter

The Florida Chapter continued its busy schedule of demonstrations during the spring season.

Plant City Model Train Show

The annual Plant City, Florida Model Train show was hosted by the H.B. Plant Railroad Historical Society on Saint Patrick's Day on March 17, 2012. As might be expected, given the venue, there were many questions regarding the role to telegraphy in the development of railroads in the United States.

CHAPTER NEWS *continued*

One visitor, a retired telegrapher, joined the Morse Telegraph Club on the spot.

On The Mall Festival

The next weekend brought another demonstration at the annual springtime On The Mall Festival in Avon Park, Florida. A steady stream of visitors through the Depot Museum kept Chapter member Warren McFarland busy demonstrating and explaining the role of American Morse telegraphy in the development of the United States and in the operation of railroads.

Trilby Depot

On that same day, chapter member Don Andrus was the acting station agent at the Trilby Depot, located on the grounds of the Pioneer Florida Museum in Dade City, FL. This included their annual model train show. Attendance was above average compared to previous years and the percentage of children with their parents or grandparents visiting the depot were most gratifying. They all received a taste of American Morse and many learned to 'hoop up' train orders. Several visited for their second year and were quick to show off what they remembered from their previous visit.

Tavares City Hall

Florida chapter members Tom Bjorkman and Warren McFarland had the mini-telegraph office and other telegraph equipment set up in the foyer of Tavares City Hall for the annual planes, trains and BBQ event, held April 7th this year. However, the location proved to be difficult because there was a competing event for visitors with rides on a wood burning steam locomotive a couple of blocks away. Although the number of visitors was fewer than in the past, those who came showed a lot of interest in the demonstration. One visitor requested membership information to send to his telegrapher brother-in-law in British Columbia.

Florida Railroad Museum


Chapter members gathered at the Central Florida Railroad Museum in Winter Garden, FL on April 28th for the annual celebration of Morse Day. An Internet connection was set up and various chapter members exchanged telegraphic greetings with members of other chapters on the Internet wire. Non-telegrapher chapter members and museum visitors were able to follow the telegraphic communications on the

museum's large screen TV which had been co-opted as a computer monitor. Chapter member Don Andrus brought his hand-crafted replica of the wireless telegraph key used on the Titanic, along with the mini replica Titanic radio shack, which he had constructed. This display drew much attention from both chapter member and museum visitors. After a companionable lunch at a nearby restaurant, a short business meeting was held, during which Tom Bjorkman was elected chapter president, Robert Feeney chapter vice-president and Clyde Francis chapter Secretary-Treasurer for the coming year. Cathy Feeney outdid herself this year by baking two birthday cakes for Samuel Morse, instead of the usual one cake. The proverbial icing on the cake for the chapter was provided by John Wood, a former telegrapher on the Soo Line RR visiting the museum. He joined MTC on the spot.

Lakeville Elementary School

The Lakeville elementary school in Apopka, FL uses a railroad theme for all of its activities because there are railroad tracks within a few blocks of the school in two directions. The annual Casey Jones week event is a planned break for students after the completion of the annual mandatory state testing. Students and faculty dress in railroad themed clothing and see video and hear railroad representatives talk about safety and other aspects of railroading. For the past two years, the FX chapter has been invited to demonstrate Morse telegraphy and talk about its connection to railroading. Chapter member Warren McFarland was given the use of a classroom on May 8th and over the course of the day, groups of students were brought in to the classroom where they saw telegraph instruments and equipment and heard both American and International Morse code. Lively question and answer sessions followed the demonstrations. Individual students in the smaller groups were given the opportunity to try their hand at sending Morse code. A great time was had by all. Genuine interest in learning Morse code was shown by a few.

Tampa Union Station

Tampa Union Station celebrated its 100 years of existence in conjunction with National Train Day on May 12, 2012. Amtrak furnished an actual train for the train buffs to walk through. There was live music, model train layouts, historical exhibits, and of course, 

CHAPTER NEWS *continued*

the Florida Chapter of the Morse Telegraph Club. Chapter members Tom Bjorkman, Clyde Francis and Warren McFarland had the mini-telegraph office open for business, as well as other telegraph instruments and equipment for display and demonstration. Visitors began arriving well before the opening hour and a flood of visitors continued throughout the day. The three chapter members were kept busy with simultaneous demonstrations of telegraphy all day. The many children and quite a few adults were given the opportunity to try to send their names in American Morse code. Several of them showed promise as telegraphers. One potential new member requested a membership application.

As previously noted, Fall, Winter, and Spring months are the busy season for the Florida Chapter. This season, the chapter participated in a record 30 separate events over that time span, plus responded to numerous inquiries generated by the chapter website www.floridamorse.com. In addition, several new members were gained, not only for the Florida chapter, but for other chapters.

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

Montreal/Ottawa Go Chapter

Floyd Everett of Victoria Corner, New Brunswick, Canada is resigning his chapter membership because his declining health has left him unable to attend meetings or read *Dots & Dashes* journal. GO Chapter members thank Floyd for his long time dedication and participation in their chapter events and wish him well.

C.D. Combs FN Chapter

The C.D. Combs FN Chapter held its 27th annual meeting on April 28, 1012 in Missouri Valley, Iowa. Thirteen members and eight spouses or guests attended. Certificates were given to members attending. The meeting was called to order by President Charles McMillan. Members brief introduced themselves, telling some of their telegraph history. The blessing was given by Paul Calhoun of Sioux City. After the meat loaf, roast beef or chicken was served, homemade cookies were provided by Wanda McMillan and Ruth Tucker. At the business meeting, the current officers were reelected for another year. They are: Charles McMillan as President, Donald Tucker as Vice President, and

Richard Behrens as Secretary-Treasurer. Ron Peters entertained the group with his accordion and Jim Albin with his harmonica. Next year's meeting will be held at the same place on April 27, 2013.

Thanks to Richard Behrens, Secretary-Treasurer of the FN Chapter for this information.



Front row left to right are: Delmar Gifford of Boone, IA, Charles McMillan of Omaha NE, Roger Hinz of Manning IA, Katherine Calhoun of Sioux City IA, David London of Newman Grove NE, Robert Lager of Logan IA.

Back row left to right are: Richard Behrens of Omaha NE, Lowell Diersen of Boone IA, Roger Sogard of Ames IA, Paul Calhoun of Sioux City IA, Tom Batten of Valley NE, Donald Tucker of Omaha NE, Ron Peters of Lincoln NE, and Jim Albin of Valparaiso NE.



Left to right are: Roger Sogard, age 85. Roger retired after 38 years with the CNW railroad. Delmar Gifford, age 92, retired after 46 1/2 years with the CGW/CNW railroad. Roger picks Delmar up to attend the meetings.

"30" SILENT KEYS

News of our brothers and sisters who have closed the key



Winnipeg WG Chapter

GLEN W. ROBINSON, age 80, passed away on August 24, 2011 at the Russell Manitoba hospital. Glen was born in Glenavon, Saskatchewan on August 17, 1931. He learned telegraphy in the 1950's at Minnedosa, MB. Glen began his career with the Canadian Pacific Railway as a call boy in Minnedosa, MB. He progressed as assistant agent on November 4, 1948 then on September 17, 1953 became an agent/operator. Glen left the railroad in 1966 to work at a potash mine at Esterhazy, SK. He joined the Morse Telegraph Club in 1993. Glen is survived by his wife, eight children, many grandchildren and great grandchildren.

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

Montreal/Ottawa GO Chapter

YVON MICHAUD, age 82, of Laprarie, Quebec passed away on May 27, 2012 after a yearlong battle with cancer. Yvon was employed as a CNR telegrapher on the Laurientian Division and later became a dispatcher in Quebec. Following that, Yvon worked on power control in Montreal until his retirement.

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

JOHN F. DEE, age 78, of Grand Falls, NB passed away on March 15, 2012. John began his career as an assistant agent with the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1951. In 1952, John became a spare telegraph operator, working at Hartland, NB. Then he became a permanent operator at Peth, NB and at Aroostook, NB. In 1967 he worked as an operator/agent at Grand Falls, NB. In 1971 John was promoted to Mobile Supervisor. He retired in 1989.

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

Maple Leaf (Toronto) ON Chapter

DAVID ANDREW MURRAY, of London, Ontario died on May 8, 2012. David began his career as a

telegraph messenger boy in Saint John, NB. He learned the code in 1943 at Saint Hohn. Before joining the CNR as a Railway Telegrapher in 1945, David worked as a commercial operator. In 1945 he transferred to Ontario to work as a telegraph operator in southern and northern Ontario. In 1949 he retired from operating in London, Ontario.

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

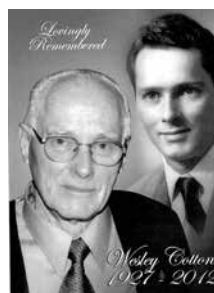
FRANCIS C. STANFIELD passed away in December 2011. Frank lived in Ontario Canada.

Thanks to John Thomassen for this brief notice.

Grand CG Chapter

JAMES A. HESS, age 88, of Dyersville, Iowa passed away March 16, 2012. Jim was born on February 17, 1924 in Farley, Iowa. He was employed by the Illinois Central Railroad as a station agent for 25 years. Then he was employed at the Ertl Toy Company in Dyersville until his retirement. He was an avid golfer and a devout Catholic. He leaves behind his wife Bette and son Mike.

Thanks to David Pennes of Grand Rapids Chapter for this information.



WESLEY HERSCHEL COTTON, age 84, of Calgary, Alberta passed away on January 28, 2012.

Wesley was born in Swan River, MB on October 1, 1927. He began his career with the Canadian Pacific Railway on June 8, 1950.

In 1962, he and his family moved to Lethbridge, Alberta, and then

in 1963 they moved to Medicine Hat. Their final move was to Calgary in 1965, where he finished his career as a train dispatcher, retiring after 38 years with the CP in May 1988. Besides his hobby of Morse telegraph, he was an avid golfer and curler.

Thanks to Ed and Dorothy Cox of Calgary, Alberta for the notification.



EARNEST T. HUFHAM, age 83, of Clarkton, North Carolina died on February 27, 2012. He was born on June 1, 1928. His amateur radio call sign was W4WH.

Thanks to Cindy Galyen, Secretary-Treasurer of the GC for this brief information.

JAMES A. MALTBY, age 92, of Weeke Wachee, Florida and formerly of Clinton, Illinois, died on April 10, 2012. He was born on September 20, 1920. Jim was the youngest of twelve children, with his mother passing away while he was sophomore in high school. Jim became interested in Ham Radio by building a crystal radio receiver. In the early 1940's, he earned his amateur radio license with the call sign W9KRH. Shining in public service, Jim received many awards and certificated of appreciation for helping pass messages during floods and other national disasters.

Jim also worked on a dairy farm in Michigan and while there sold his horse. This horse became famous as "Silver" the trusty steed ridden by the "Lone Ranger."

Jim started his lifetime career working for the Illinois Central Railroad. He had learned to telegraph by using the keys on a piano. During his career, he worked as agent, telegraph operator and train dispatcher, retiring in 1980 as station agent at Decatur, Illinois. One of the highlights of his railroad career was his copying via a telegraph sounder for the Clinton Journal the U.S. President's "VJ" message, announcing the surrender of Japan.

Jim loved the Lord and was very active in his church, serving as deacon, trustee, and Sunday school teacher.

Thanks to James W. Maltby, son, for this valuable information about his dad.

Joseph Henry (Albany) AB Chapter

ROBERT H. AXTELL, age 100, passed away on April 9, 2012. His daughter, Ruth Axtell, sent us the notice of her father's demise. "Until fairly recently, he used his telegraph each evening to communicate with others by Morse code," she says. Ruth adds that her dad resided in Shelton, Connecticut and "worked all his life in radio from setting up transmitters in Venezuela, Galapagos islands (during WWII), all the way to the U.S Naval Telecommunications station in Cutlet, Maine."

Thanks to Ruth Axtell for this interesting information about her dad.

Southern California SQ Chapter

ROBERT L. SHRADER of Sebastopol, California passed away this past spring. Robert's son, Doug, described his dad as, "the passing of one of radio's remaining greats, Robert (Bob) L. Shrader, W6BNW."

Thanks also to Cathy Stanfill, Secretary-Treasurer of the SQ Chapter for additional information.

C.D. Combs FN Chapter

GENE R. FILE, age 79, of LeMars, Iowa, passed away on April 23, 2012. He was born in Rock Rapids, Iowa on December 18, 1932. After graduating from Rock Rapids High School in 1950, Gene took a position with the Illinois Central railroad as a telegrapher, then later as a clerk. Gene was active in the BRAC union, including serving as president. On December 26, 1975, Gene and Alice McVicker were married in Remsen, Iowa. They made their home in LeMars. Gene retired from the railroad in May 1993.

Gene attended all of his children's events and was very involved with the LeMars baseball Little League. In 1979, Gene was honored with umpiring the Little League World Series in Williamsport, PA. He was also active in various community groups including the Kiwanis, Remsen Lutheran Church, LeMars Library and Postal House. In 2007, he was honored as "Citizen of the Year" by the LeMars Chamber of Commerce. He is survived by his wife, Alice of 36 years, three sons and one daughter.

Thanks to Richard Behrens, Secretary Treasurer of the FN Chapter for this information.

Saskatoon KN Chapter

WALTER JAMES ANTIFEAV, age 82, passed away on April 29, 2012. He was born on a farm near Arran, SK. After finishing grade and high school in Pelly, SK, in 1950, Walter enrolled in a school of telegraphy and Railroad operations in Vancouver, BC. In 1951 he started his Railway career with the CNR as Towerman/Leverman at Yorkton, SK. His career took him to Operator and Agency positions in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, retiring as Station Agent in Elrose, SK.

Walter was a senior member of the KN Chapter in Saskatoon and participated in many telegraph demonstrations at the WDM.

Silent Keys, continued from previous page

Thanks to Bill Ryan, Publicist for the KN Chapter. Bill adds that Walter " will be greatly missed by the KN Chapter members."

Lone Star (Dallas/Fort Worth) DF Chapter

CURTIS J. RAMBIN, age 89, longtime member of the MTC Lone Star Chapter died in Pauls Valley, Oklahoma on March 14, 2012, following several years of declining health. Curtis was born into a railroad family in Morrow, Louisiana on December 30, 1923. His father was a boomer telegrapher, an uncle was a yardmaster, a brother was a telegrapher on the BN RR, and two sons became train order operators then later BN RR train dispatchers. Curtis served as a radioman in the Navy during WWII and was proficient at both codes. Curtis is survived by his wife of 68 years, Bernice, and seven children and many grandchildren.

Thanks to Eugene Wood of Madill, OK for this interesting history of Curtis. Eugene adds personal recollections:

"Curtis and I were long time friends. We went to work on the Frisco RR about a month apart in 1942 and enjoyed visiting on the wire and in person. We were drafted and met in the induction station in Tulsa and rode the train to San Diego where we went thru Boot Camp and Radio School together, impressing the code instructor with our brilliant sending and receiving. (Ha, ha). I got him to join MTC, and although he was not able to attend meetings, he enjoyed reading Dots & Dashes. He will be missed!"

Edmonton MO Chapter

MAXINE BAGAN, age 89, passed away on May 5, 2012. She was born on June 13, 1923 in the Canadian National Railway terminal town of Biggar, Saskatchewan, where she learned telegraph as a young lady. Upon graduating from high school, she became employed by the Canadian National Telecommunications as a commercial telegraph operator in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Maxine and the former President of the Morse Telegraph Club, Lavina Shaw, worked together as commercial operators in Saskatoon for several years. These two young ladies were excellent operators and among the very few female operators in Canada at that time Maxine and Lavina became life time friends.

Maxine was a charter member of the MTC Edmonton Chapter, active until illness overtook her, placing her in a wheel chair. She is survived by her husband, Myron, sons David Michael and Wesley Daniel, Daughter-in-law Ann, three grandsons, her sister Joan Elsey, several nephews and nieces and a number of other close relations.

Thanks to Jim Munsey of the Edmonton Chapter for this interesting information. Jim adds:

"She will be missed by all her knew her and she will be remembered for her love and interest in all her friends and relatives as well as for her courage and an indomitable spirit fueled by her lifelong love and practice of music."

DO YOU KNOW?

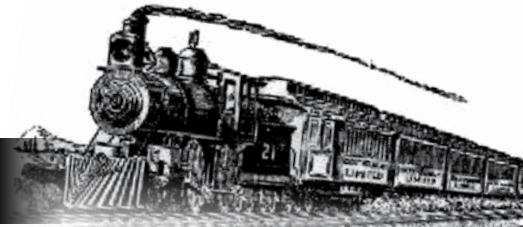
What is a fiber optic cable and how does it work?

A fiber-optic cable contains many strands of glass or plastic. These fibers can transmit messages or images up to 13,000 miles without significant distortion or loss of signal. At the receiving end, the light beams are converted back into electric current and decoded. Fiber-optic cables have a much greater bandwidth than wires. The main disadvantage of fiber-optic cables is their high cost.

Source: Carneige Department of Science and Technology in Pittsburgh

WELCOME ABOARD

News of Our New Morse Telegraph Club Members



Winnipeg WG Chapter

W.M. (MERV) HALL was born on January 11, 1933 in Rosetown, SK. In 1944 his family moved to Saskatoon, SK. While shooting gophers along the CNR tracks near Saskatoon, Merv and his brother would often stop at the CNR train order office at Chappell, nearly four miles west of Saskatoon. Today this is the site of the CNR mail station, but in 1949 it was about fifty miles out of town. Merv learned telegraphy in 1950 from Al Doering, the day operator at Chappell, with help from Bill Doering and Ed Yerex. Since there were no job openings on the CNR in early 1951, Merv began his career as a telegraph operator with the CPR, working at stations east of Hardisty, AB. By 1953, with no permanent job in sight on the railroad, Merv quit the railway and started his new career as a telegraph operator with the Dominion Government Telegraphs in Dawson Creek, BC. But at that time, Merv did not realize that all telegraphy would come to an end soon. By 1956, all government telegraph offices were shut down. Merv then felt fortunate at securing a job with an oil refinery and gas processing plant. Thirty-three years later, he retired from that job.

Merv, welcome to the Morse Telegraph Club. You have joined a group of unique folks.

Grand GC Chapter

JOHN M. TOLER of North Little Rock, Arkansas just joined the MTC but he neglected to tell us the details of his interest in telegraphy.

John, welcome to the MTC; hope you will enjoy your new opportunities.

BRUCE D. SCHRIMPF, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin was born on August 29, 1945. But he didn't mention his interests in telegraph.

Bruce, you will be pleased with your new fellowship in MTC.

MICHAEL F. BADGLEY of Tipton, Indiana was born on October 13, 1943. His father and grandpa were railroaders with the WKP. In his own words, "I spent time as a boy in the smoke filled RF

office." That is where he developed his interest in telegraphy. In 1989, Mike earned his amateur radio license with the call sign WT9R. Mike says he enjoys working CW and would like to learn the railroad code.

Michael, we welcome you to new exciting opportunities with the MTC.

JOHN W. THOMAS of Valdosta, Georgia was born on October 16, 1925. He neglected to describe his interest in the telegraph.

John, welcome to the Morse Telegraph Club. You will be glad that you joined.

STEVEN F. NOWORYTA of Valdalia, Ohio was born on April 13, 1942. Steve states on his application that he is "very interested in the history of telegraphy." He also earned an amateur radio license K2NS.

Steven, we offer you a special welcome to MTC

Florida FX Chapter

RICHARD L. JOHNSON of Cape Canaveral, Florida just joined the MTC, but he also neglected to describe his life experiences with the telegraph.

Richard, we look forward to your participation in FX chapter events.

ROLAND T. STAYTON of Crestwood, Kentucky was born in 1928. He began his career as a telegrapher in 1946, continuing as a dispatcher beginning in 1964. He spent his railroading career with the Norfolk & Southern Railway.

Roland, welcome to the Morse Telegraph Club. We hope that you will be amazed.

JOHN A. WOOD of Leesburg, Florida was born on December 12, 1936. He spent his career with the Soo Line Railroad.

John, you will add value to the FX Chapter and will have fun doing it.

Montreal/Ottawa GO Chapter

Paul O. Bergeron of Gatineau, QC was born on July 18, 1934 at Trois Rivières, Montreal. He worked from 1953 – 1957 on the Smith Falls, Farnham & Lareseteen Divisions, 1957 – 1962

Welcome Aboard, continued from previous page

as an operator in Prescott, Ontario, 1962 – 1987 at Gatineau, Quebec, and 1988 – 1990 at Vaudreuil, Quebec, where he retired.

Paul, MTC welcomes your experience and enthusiasm.

RICHARD CORBEIL of Ottawa, Ontario was born on August 27, 1936 in Montreal. He worked for the CPT in 1951 as a clerk. In 1954 he became a Morse operator, moved to T&R chief in 1957, and then became wire chief in 1962, all in Montreal.

Welcome to MTC, Richard.

Rochelle Chapter

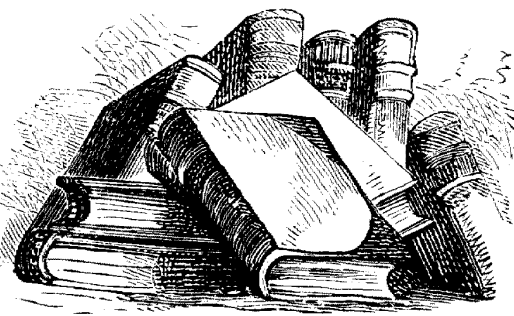
LAWRENCE L. HUML, JR. of Waukegan, Illinois re-joined MTC.

Welcome back, Larry!

Washington-Baltimore WA Chapter

JEFF BELL of Riverdale, Western Australia. Jeff holds the amateur radio call sign VK6FJEF. He chose to join the WA chapter.

Welcome aboard, Jeff, and enjoy reading Dots & Dashes.



BOOK REVIEWS

In a captivating first person POV, George Campbell tells his story about what it was like to be a Morse Telegraph Operator in *Good Night Old Man*.



Good Night Old Man will take you back in time to discover a medium that has long since declined as a method of everyday communication. Telegraph was the leading edge technology of its time and the precursor to many of our modern communication outlets. From 1844 – 1972, this

form of communication was relayed all over the world through the language of Morse and other codes. Although still in use by ham operators and club enthusiasts, few landline commercial operators remain who can tell the story of dots and dashes with as much passion and memory as George Campbell.

The dream of becoming a commercial Morse operator required not only skill but took a passionate, determined dedication to the learning of Morse code. It took patience and lots of practice to master hearing, typing and translating the messages being received and sent. At 85, George Campbell can still converse in the language he used during the 1940s and '50s in a job where he found so much delight – “it did not feel like work.”

Step back into a slice Canada’s communication history and share George’s story, *Good Night Old Man*.

Good Night Old Man and other titles by Dream Write Publishing can be ordered directly from the publisher www.dreamwritepublishing.ca or for more information, contact Linda J. Pedley at 780-445-0991.

MTC President Jim Wades recommends your reading this book.

TELEGRAPH HISTORY IN HUMBOLDT SASKATCHEWAN

Written by MTC member Pat Kelly of Sidney, BC

Catherine Liggett was born in Ireland in 1850. Together with her brother she left for the USA in 1871. In 1876 she married George Weldon, also from Ireland, and they moved to Hamilton, Ontario.

George was soon approached by a representative of the Canadian Pacific Telegraph Service who asked him to build and operate a telegraph station near Humboldt, Saskatchewan to provide a telegraph link to Eastern Canada. Catherine, known as Kate, was a first rate telegraph operator and she taught George the trade, and on August 25th, 1878 sent her first telegraph message. She was the first female telegrapher in the west. The station was rather rough hewn with a dirt floor and sparse amenities but the Weldons became known for their hospitality and the warm welcome afforded weary travellers. Living with the Weldons was Kate's sister, Margaret Liggett. She had a gun and was known for her marksmanship.

Later, in 1881, the family was surprised by a visit from the Marquis of Lorne, the Governor General. The Marquis was much taken with Kate and George and their hospitality, and recorded that

Margaret was a pretty Irish girl and a crack shot. In fact one day while out in the fields, she was confronted by a wolverine, a most vicious predator. She was able to kill the animal as it advanced on her. In 1884 she married Alfred Lindburgh and he became the station agent at Kutawa. Strangely enough, Margaret's original gun has since been located in Victoria, B.C. and has now been donated to the Humboldt Museum. In 1882 the Weldons had a child who despite all that could be done, died shortly after.

In 1883 the family left for Grenfell, Saskatchewan, where a son was born.

During the Riel Rebellion there was a serious uprising in the Batoche area and the telegraph station at Humboldt was fortified and extensive trenches dug for the protection of the site.

In 1980, research by interested residents identified the site of the station, and brought to life much interesting and historical data.

As a result The Humboldt District Museum now possesses the Humboldt Telegraph Station exhibit. Catherine Weldon died in 1903.

A TELEGRAPH LEGACY

At last, you can now order a copy of *A Telegraph Legacy*. Recall that this was described in a major *Dots & Dashes* article in a previous issue. So, if you or your chapter would like to order a copy of "A Telegraph Legacy," mail a donation of \$20 to International Secretary-

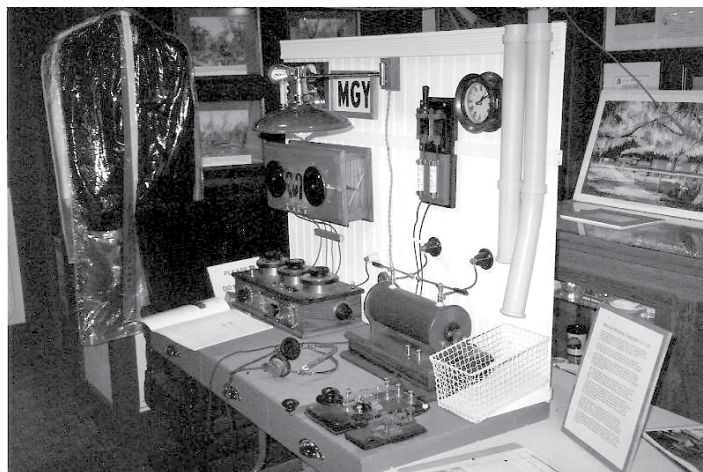
Treasurer Cindy Galyen with your return address. Cindy's mailing address is 29150 Windsor Road in Culpeper, Virginia 22701, USA. Your donation, made payable to MTC, will cover the cost of duplicating the DVD and cost of postage.

TITANIC RADIO ROOM REPLICA DRAWS INTEREST ON MORSE DAY

The simulated radio room of the RMS Titanic constructed by Florida Chapter member Don Andrus drew considerable attention during the chapter's 2012 annual Morse Day celebration held in the Central Florida Railroad Museum, Winter Garden, FL. Other chapter members, as well as museum visitors, were highly interested in the representation. As there are no photographs of the radio room of RMS Titanic, the replica is based on photographs of the radio room in the RMS Olympic, a sister ship to the RMS Titanic in the White Star Fleet. The Marconi Company provided the equipment and staff for all of the ships in that fleet. They also assigned the call signs for each ship. The call sign for RMS Titanic was MGY.

Passengers aboard the Titanic who wished to send a wireless message would go to the Enquiry Office (White Star terminology for the Purser's Office) on the ship to write out the message, which would then be delivered to the radio room through a pneumatic tube, visible in the photograph, for transmission. A wireless message received in the radio room for a passenger would likewise be sent to the Enquiry Office via the pneumatic tube, for ultimate delivery to the passenger. Thus, the radio operators had no direct contact with the passengers.

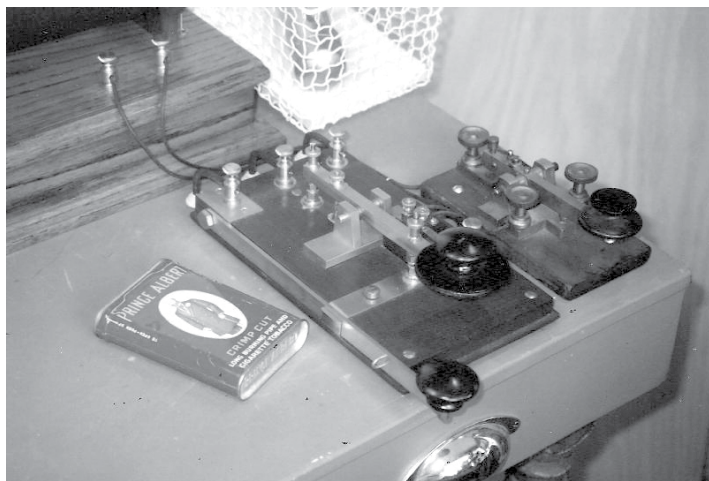
The wireless telegraph key in the photograph was handcrafted by Don, based on images of the style of key with which the Marconi Company



equipped the other large ships in the White Star Fleet. The base of the key is 9x5 inches, a huge key. Nevertheless, it is a working key, although it is easy to understand the prevalence of "telegrapher's paralysis" after using it. (The Prince Albert can is in the photograph to demonstrate the size of the key.) On the left side of the key is a knob, which looks as though it might be another key. It is not a key, but a knife switch which could be used to open the circuit if the large contacts on the key welded themselves together, due to the high current used in the transmitter. The smaller key to the right of the large key is a Swedish key from the Titanic era, which would have been used for the emergency spark gap transmitter. It is not a replica.

The simulated radio room and replica wireless telegraph key are currently on display at the Molly Brown (of Titanic fame) House in Denver and later this summer will move to the Denver Air & Space Museum.

Thanks to Warren McFarland of the FX Chapter for this story and photographs. You may contact Warren at wmcfarland@cfrr.com



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 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: 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 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: 2012 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 \$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

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.

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.

Jim Wilson
Editor
Dots & Dashes

2742 Southern Hills Court
North Garden, Virginia 22959
Tel: 434-245-7041
E-mail: telegraphjim@gmail.com

For membership changes, address updates, dues and other information dealing with membership or with chapter operation, contact your local Chapter Secretary or:

Cindy Galyen
International Secretary-Treasurer

29150 Windsor Road,
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

Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.
Dial-Up Information

U.S. (KB) HUB
1-269-697-4506/4508/4513
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CANADIAN (HN) HUB
1-888-822-3728 (toll free)

MORSE KOB PROGRAM
on the web at www.morsekob.org

DUES

U.S. First Class postage \$15.00
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Remorse Code by Sophie

