



Dots&Dashes

What

Hath

God

Wrought

The Official Publication of the Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

Vol. 39, Issue No. 2 • Spring 2014

MTC RECEIVES VALUABLE ITEMS

by James Wades, International MTC President

As you know, the Board of Directors has authorized the rental of a secure storage facility for the creation of a MTC archive. I have recently begun the process of sorting and cataloging a wide variety of items, which will be stored for future projects. These items include telegraph instruments, telegraph industry ephemera, and a wide range of historic documents.

Recently, we received an archive of memorabilia from the family of George O. Hack. Mr. Hack was a long-time Western Union Employee who spent his entire working life with "Uncle Wes." He was also very active in the Morse Telegraph Club. The process of cataloging and inventorying these materials has turned up quite a few excellent photographs, documents and the like.

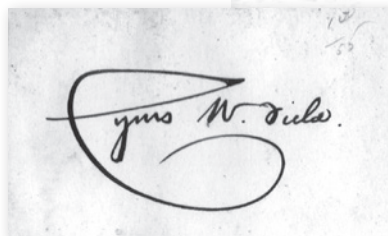
I have included a few interesting items from the collection of Mr. Hack, the first of which is a photograph of Cyrus Field along with some personal correspondence and the like.



Cyrus West Field

*Picture presented by
his great-niece,
Miss Virginia Field
Stockbridge, Mass.
to*

*George O. Hack
June 1958.*



Dots & Dashes

The official publication of

The Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

Jim Wilson - Editor, *Dots & Dashes*

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Note: If possible, please include a copy of an obituary and other available information about his/her career and relationship to telegraphy and/or the telegraph industry.

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Your Articles and Stories: MTC is always looking for original photographs, stories and articles about your experiences in telegraphy or radiotelegraphy. Please send articles and news stories to the Editor of *Dots and Dashes*.

Telegraph Talks and Demonstrations: If you or your local chapter should schedule any demonstrations, talks or other special events, please notify the International President so he can publish your event in our on-line calendar.

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

➡ 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



Sidewire

Comments from the
Editor of *Dots & Dashes*

By Jim Wilson



After an unusually long bitterly cold winter, we will all welcome spring with open arms. And with warmer weather, many of our chapter members will get back out there demonstrating and explaining the telegraph to a curious public. Remind those curious folks that the telegraph was a revolutionary invention and that the telegraph is rated as one of the world's top ten inventions in human history! (See the front page article of the summer 2009 issue of *Dots & Dashes*).

Of our 29 MTC Chapters, only two sent in chapter news reports for this issue. But cold weather slows a lot of us down. The Florida Chapter is always hyper-active during winter, when their weather is ideal. Read about the interesting FX Chapter activities on page 12.

The next big event for the Morse Telegraph Club is the "Dayton Hamvention" in Dayton, Ohio. If you have the opportunity to attend the Hamvention on May 16-18, please do. Just like last year and the year before, I plan to be there with stacks of sample copies of *Dots & Dashes* to distribute to interested folks. President Jim Wade and newly elected Vice President J. Chris Haussler and others will be manning the MTC booth.

On March 22nd, my wife Becky and son Matt and I attended a fascinating panel discussion titled "The Railroad in American Life." The four men in front of the live TV cameras, James Porterfield, Eric Riback, Dennis Drabelle, and Tony Reeve, have each published numerous books on railroading. The important role of the telegraph in development of the railroad was highlighted. You can investigate their new publications by Googling their names on the Web.

In the previous issue, Chris Hausler reviewed the 1878 book, "Sam Johnson: The Experiences and Observations of a Railroad Telegraph Operator," and the radio program series, "Green Valley Line." I purchased the book and listened to a sample of the radio programs from the Web. Chris has more great reviews in this issue on page 19.

Hey, if you completed your annual U.S. income taxes by the April 15th deadline, it's time to go read a book and to practice your valuable telegraph skills. I'm not sure the due date for Canadian taxes; readers let me know. Now it's time to go have fun.

Jim Wilson

President's Line

Jim Wades, President
Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.



This month's President's Line consists of a lengthy report covering the results of the most recent MTC Board of Directors Meeting.

Your Board is taking a number of steps to position MTC for future growth and viability. Foremost in the mind of your International President is positioning MTC to leave a lasting legacy, which will honor and perpetuate the history of telegraphy and the telegraph industry.

Because none of us will live forever, it is important to develop institutional solutions that will ensure the survival of our Club, its history and its mission of preserving the history of telegraphy and the telegraph industry long after those of us here today have been transferred to the that Relay Office where the Grand Architect of the Universe presides. This means that strategic goals designed to perpetuate this mission should not rely on the actions or energy of any one person or small group of people.

It is also important that the focus of our organization remain on the history of telegraphy and the telecommunications industry. While allied fields, such as maritime radio, military radio and Amateur Radio are part of our story, we must be careful to position MTC so that it doesn't simply become another Amateur Radio CW group. There are other organizations already engaged in this latter field of historic preservation, which do excellent work. While MTC certainly shouldn't ignore the contributions of wireless telegraphy and radio, we must nonetheless strike a balance, which ensures that the history of commercial and railroad telegraphy remain at the core of our mission.

As you will see in related articles, MTC is taking steps toward a more institutional approach, which will hopefully preserve our history for many years to come. For example, MTC has changed its US tax status from that of a fraternal non-profit corporation to that of a charitable and educational non-profit corporation. This allows us to accept donations of historic telegraph instruments and telegraph ephemera from estates and voluntary donations, while offering a tax deduction to the donor. It also allows us to seek

President's Line continued...

grants from foundations to fund special projects, such as the construction of a permanent telegraph museum, pre-assembled exhibits, which can be loaned to high-profile public museums and other public education projects in association with Universities and public institutions.

Your Board has also established a storage facility to house our existing inventory of telegraph instruments, documents, photographs and similar ephemera. At the minimum, this facility allows us to accept and store telegraph instruments for eventual redistribution to qualified public museums for either temporary or permanent exhibits, and, ideally, it positions us to eventually move toward the establishment of a permanent museum of telegraphy through which the accurate story of the telegraph industry can be told. In the coming months, a team of MTC volunteers will perform an inventory of all telegraph items and documentation in our possession. This accomplishes several important goals by standardizing the accession process, ensuring transparency and preventing a problem that has plagued many small historical groups, which is the unfortunate tendency of valuable collectible items to be diverted into the hands of private collectors.

The Board has also authorized retaining a part-time business manager with a professional accounting and business management background. Because of our non-profit nature, we are obtaining these services at a discounted rate. This company will henceforth be responsible for maintaining our membership database, processing dues payments from the US and Canada, maintaining accurate, professional books, and filing any required annual tax returns or related paperwork. This takes a big load off of our volunteer International Secretary-Treasurer, freeing her up to handle the day-to-day tasks associated with club correspondence and the like. As those who have held this position know, it is a time consuming activity, which requires a broad range of skills. It is also a position in our organization, which has been very hard to fill! The use of an outside accounting firm also ensures good governance by separating book-keeping from the process of banking and expenditures, thereby providing checks and balances that not only protect our members, but also satisfy the requirements of any outside organizations with which we work.

The Board also discussed methods to handle struggling MTC Chapters. Based on a discussion of the Constitution and By-Laws, and with the help of such experts on organizational governance as George Nixon, Jr., it was determined that the existing By-Laws authorize your International President to assist

local Chapters with basic administrative tasks when so requested. This will hopefully allow us to keep a struggling Chapter going for a period of time until a suitable candidate for Chapter Secretary-Treasurer can be located.

A big issue at the meeting was that of increased postal costs. Both the United States and Canada are planning significant increases in postal costs. For many years now, MTC has held its annual dues at the same level, despite significant inflation. It has always been our goal to keep the cost of our dues low, particularly because we have a large number of members living on fixed income from pensions and the like. However, with the postage increases of the past several years, and with more increases forecast to come, our current dues no longer cover the production and mailing of *Dots & Dashes*. Therefore, effective in 2015, MTC members will see a dues increase of 5-dollars per year for first-class mail delivery of *Dots & Dashes*. Chapters will likewise see an increased charge per member for delivery of our Journal. While we don't want to do it, the fact remains that we have held our dues at the current level for well over a decade during a period in which the cost of postage, printing and similar expenses has risen dramatically. We can no longer absorb subsequent increases at the current dues level. In summary, 2015 dues will be:

US First Class Delivery \$20⁰⁰

US Electronic Delivery \$12⁰⁰

There is a new Chapter formula in place as well, the details of which will be sent to the Chapters. As many know, dues paid to the various Chapters throughout the US and Canada are structured in a manner that provides a small additional revenue stream for local Chapter operations, with the remainder covering the usual cost of *Dots & Dashes*. Suffice to say, the Chapters will not see a decrease in revenue.

Some other issues covered at the meeting include a summary of museum projects conducted over the past year, a summary of revenue from museum contributions to the Morse Telegraph Club (an income of approximately \$ 3000.00 in 2013), and other items, such as the appointment of a new Registered Agent to serve as Point of Contact for the State of Illinois, where MTC is incorporated.

Last, but not least, the Board formally reported on the resignation of several MTC Directors. New Officers were elected to fill these vacancies left on the Board. These appointments will be announced in a separate article in an upcoming issue of *Dots & Dashes*.

President's Line continued...

If anyone would like a detailed copy of the meeting agenda or minutes, please contact the International President.

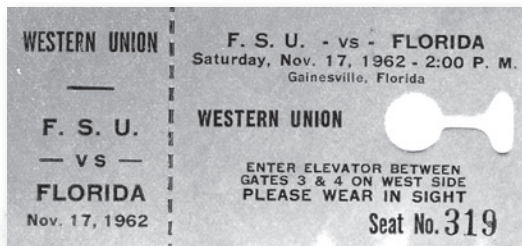
On a final, unrelated note, MTC has several high-profile events scheduled for this summer. This year's Dayton "Hamvention" Exhibit will be twice as large and it will incorporate the presence of not just MTC, but items from the WITP Telegraph Museum operated by Tom Perera. Visitors will not only have a chance to learn about MTC, but they will also have an opportunity to view historic "enigma" machines and other rare artifacts. A similar exhibit is also arranged for the ARRL 100th Anniversary Convention at Hartford Connecticut. This latter event should

expose MTC to a large number of potential members from the East Coast of the United States; an area in which we are rather short of members despite a large population concentration.

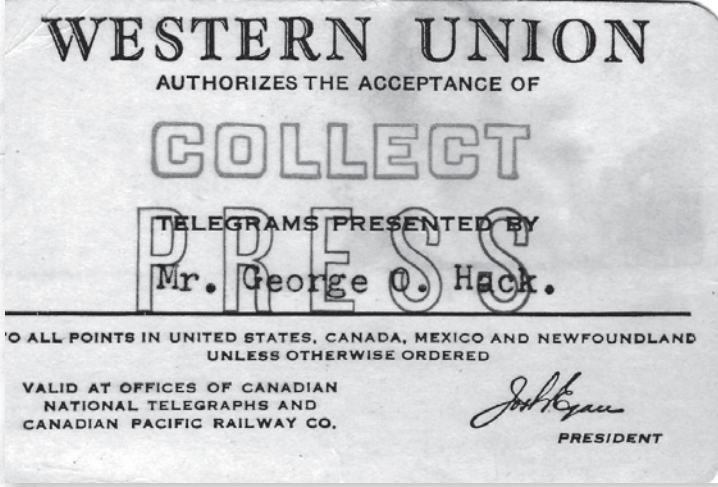
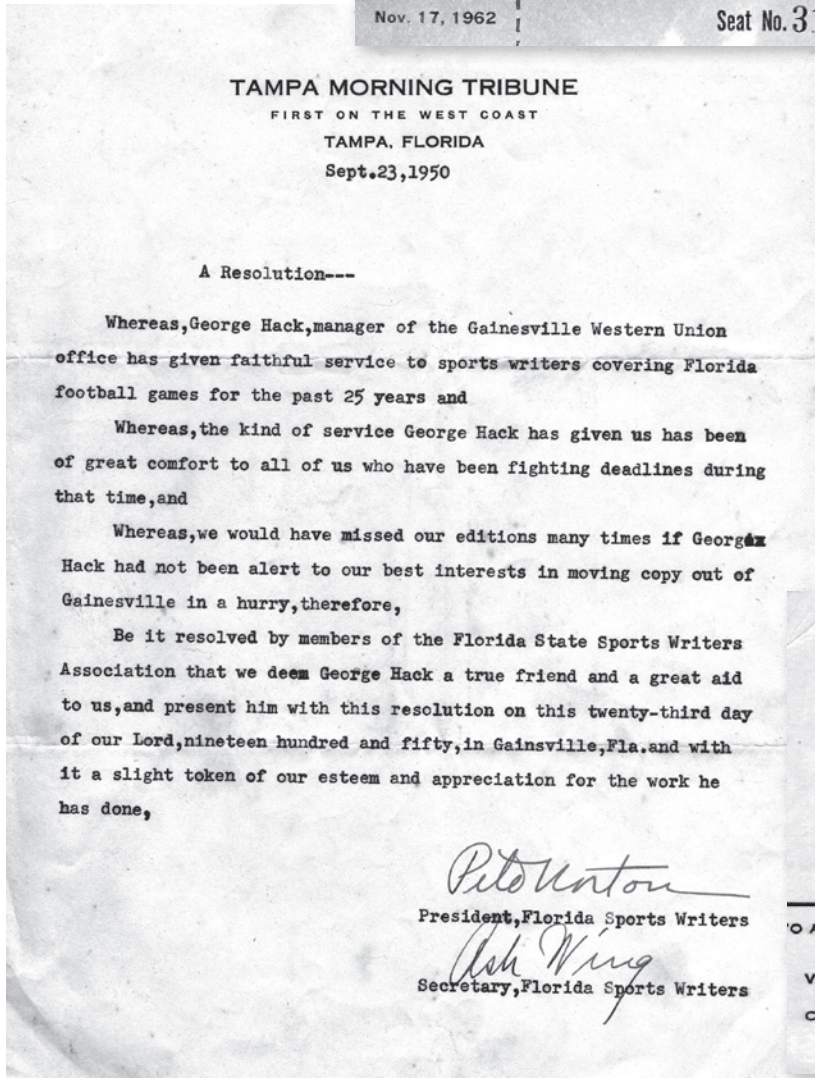
As usual, our various Chapters will be conducting telegraph demonstrations throughout the US and Canada. Please be sure to notify the International President of any upcoming telegraph demonstrations you plan to conduct. These events will be posted to the MTC Facebook Page as part of our public outreach process. By publicizing these events, we raise the profile of MTC and we can attract greater interest through the usual "social networking" channels.

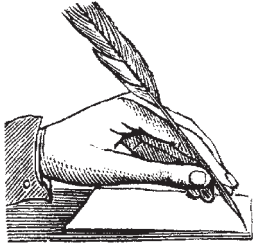
-30-

MTC Receives Valuable Items continued from the front page



New York, 13 April 1875.
My dear Mr. Sedgwick,
The enclosed I return to you,
Signed as requested.
It is my intention to attend
the dinner to Mr. Schurz.
I am shocked & pained to
see in the papers the death of
Mrs. Godkin.
Remain,
My dear Mr. Sedgwick,
Very truly your friend,
John W. Child.
A. G. Sedgwick Esq.





Letters to the Editor

January 1st

Enclosed is the article that I talked about for the last couple of years at the Dayton Hamvention in Ohio. All my radio equipment is on the fritz, so I decided it was time to do something with it. If you can use my story fine. If not, I'm not wounded by rejection letters!

*Howard Eskridge
Tuscola, IL*

(Read Howard's article on page 10)

January 27th

I am a member of the Florida FX Chapter of the Morse Telegraph Club, am 70 years old and am not found of modern communications. Since I am not on the "world wide web," I asked a friend of mine to reply to Mr. Charles Beckett, pages 6&7 of the winter 1013-14 issue of Dots & dashes. But my friend quickly found that Mr. Beckett's listed e-mail address did not work. I would appreciate a letter from you advising me of Mr. Beckett's postal address so that I may mail the following offer of assistance and information that he requested.

"Mr. Beckett, congratulations on the historical preservation work that you have already achieved. The potograph on page 6 of the MTC D&D winter 2013-14 issue appears to show ten 6 lamp porcelain panels and ten 16 jack test panels of porcelain or molded insulation, arranged as they would be if taken off a standard Western Union Telegraph switchboard of the early 20th century. If you are still seeking information concerning this apparatus, I would be happy to send you copies of pertinent information from AART&T manual and ICS textbooks of telegraphy, circa 1930."

*Respectfully,
Joe Cristian
Jasper, Alabama*

(Readers, I researched and sent joe the requested information. ~Editor Jim)

January 27th

Many thanks for the *Dots & Dashes* winter 2013-14 article by Ed Trump on duplex and quadruplex circuits. The article was enjoyable and informative and the technical aspects were quite correct. As one familiar with the actual operation of Trunk and Dux circuits, permit me some time to reminisce.



At various Western Union relay offices, the Dux telegraphers were not facing on opposite sides of the tables, but were positioned side by side. One reason for this was that there were none of those long shelves in the center extending the full length of the tables, which held various forms or numerous racks. There was a continuously running canvas belt surround by a metal V-shaped trough where sent and received traffic was placed. Then this traffic was carried to the end of the table for check clerks to handle. Humorously, in 1964 at the WU "SK" office, that contraption was dismantled. In its place we were given those "Shepherd's hooks." A telegram dated September 1910 apparently had gotten trapped underneath the moving belt for 54 years. It was nothing of importance, but undoubtedly, following that long a delay, the sender and recipient didn't exactly hold "Uncle Wes" in the greatest esteem.

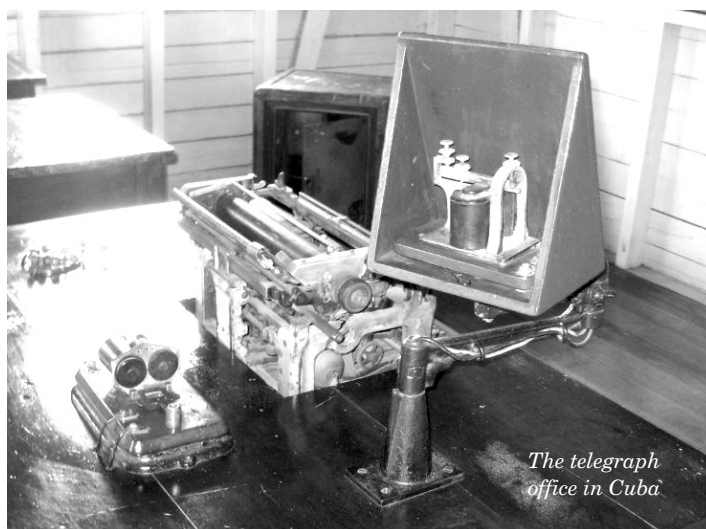
Some of our Dux and heavy traffic trunk lines had two 400 ohm sounders mounted vertically in one resonator for dual operations. There were no adjustable 100 ohm relays used with those circuits such as found on the simplexes.

February 17th

While on a cruise around the island of Cuba, I went on a shore excursion which included Biran, where Fidel Castro grew up on a sugar plantation. The plantation buildings are now a heritage site, and one building was the telegraph office (attached picture). Due to not being able to speak Spanish, I didn't find out who did the telegraphy. Although the Castro family was considered wealthy, their family home was very plain and simple. Their guest house was more pretentious.

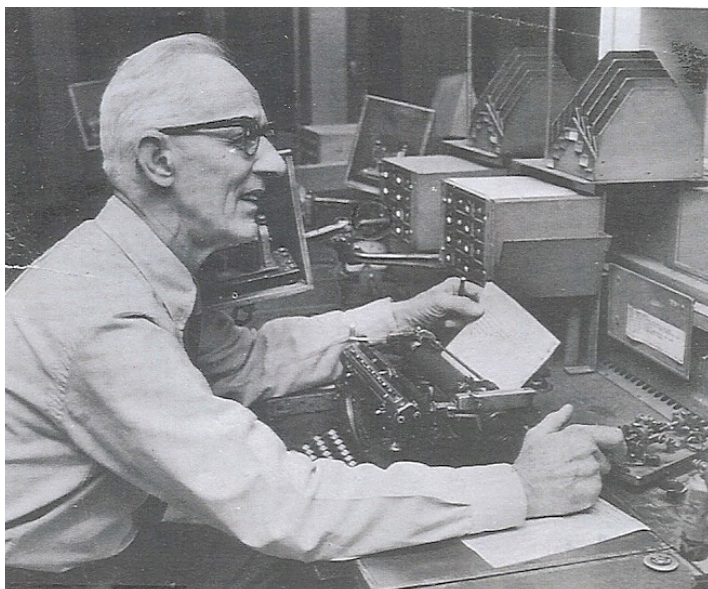
Lavina Shaw
Former International President

February 17th



I was very interested in Betty Broome Newkirk's article on "Romance Over the Airways". I've always told people that I met my husband over the "original chat line". My late husband, Earl, was an operator at Melville Sk, while I worked in the commercial relay office in Saskatoon SK. Melville was a busy station, and I copied a lot of telegrams that Earl sent. One day, he came to Saskatoon, a trip of about 120 miles, and decided to see this "female" telegrapher. That evening we were both invited to dinner at the home of Ed and Ev Yerex (Ed was formerly the head of the dispatchers' union). I think this was a set-up, as Earl had to walk me home. For 2-1/2 years, we kept in touch by Morse and regular mail while both of us were transferred to various towns and cities. Finally, Earl proposed, and we were married six months later.

I was also interested in Pat Kelly's story about the Falkland Islands. During World War 2, my family hosted many airmen from England. One frequent visitor was Bruce "Bill" Bailey who eventually became an Air Vice Marshall and led the invasion of



In GNRY relay offices, where I occasionally "scooped" such as "V" Saint Paul or "Q" Spokane, the operators sat next to each other. If an operator had to break, the resonator was turned toward the other person next to them so they could know where to go ahead, etc, or for that "gotta five dots" immediate necessity. Yet, at "AD" Minot North Dakota, the operators on the Saint Paul Dux as shown in one of the enclosed photos, did sit opposite each other. While the most experienced operators were assigned to these circuits, relief of rill-in proficient with simplex operations were properly and quickly oriented.

One could surmise that the operating sets and procedures varied greatly with each commercial company or railway. At Western Union, for the most part we handled single copy on standard sized forms or a longer one for lengthy messages and two to four CY press material. On the other hand, railways had what seemed like an endless number of different forms, single and multi-copy forms. These used Morse in much greater depth than did commercial concerns.

In 1970, Western Union disconnected any remaining Morse circuits everywhere. My work history after that can only be described as chaotic at best. As I told every newspaper and television reporter who ever interviewed me about this, "My one and only profession was a Morse telegrapher; everything else was just a dang job." and I meant it!

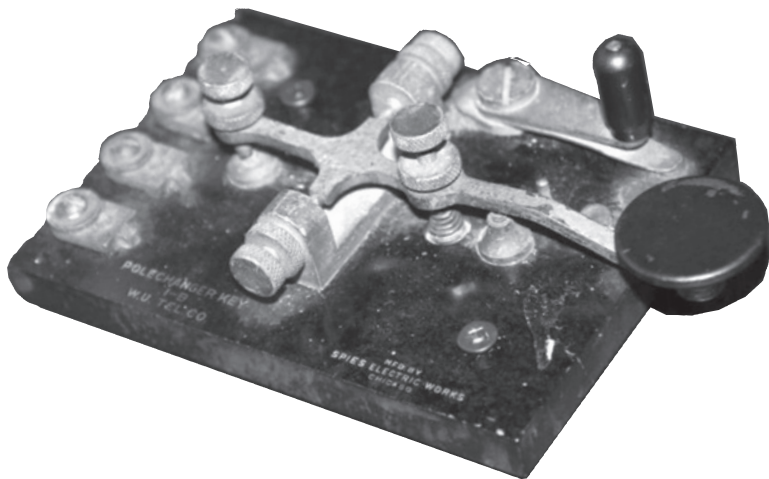
30 & 73, L.R. Keith "KY"
MX Office, Ritzville, Washington
DI Chapter, Vancouver, BC

the Falkland Islands when Argentina tried to take them over. Bruce and his wife visited Earl and I in the 1980's after he retired from the Royal Air Force.

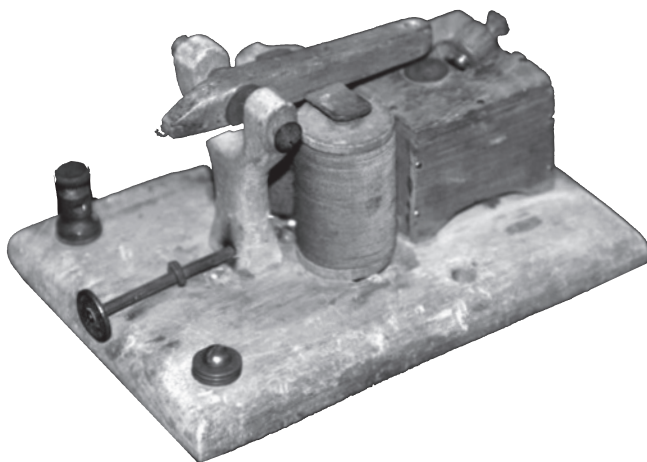
*Larina Shaw
Former International President*

February 20th

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for inviting me to exhibit Civil War era telegraphy at the state history museum on President's Day. I really enjoyed putting together an exhibit like this for the first time; most of the time my exhibits are either "period" Civil War telegraph depictions (meaning everything is depicted as being in the time period) or later-era telegraph exhibits (such as from 1900-1920).



Western Union Telegraph Co. 1-B polechanger key, circa 1940-50

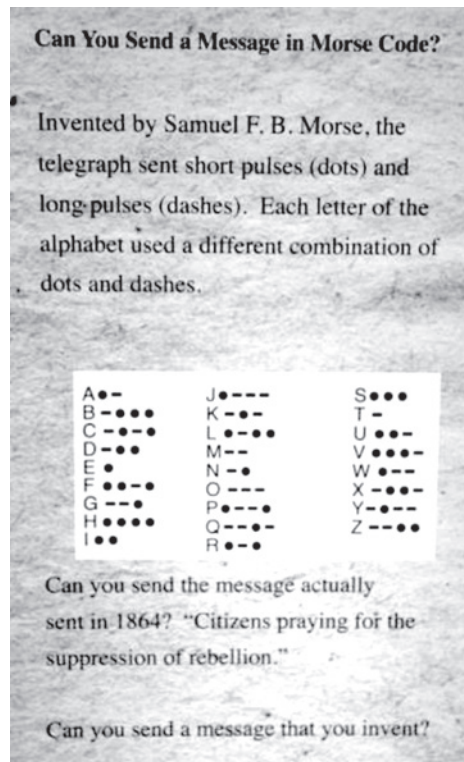


"Wood telegraph key." This is a home-made telegraph sounder with wood box resonator. A oil lamp wick adjustment knob and shaft is used to control spring tension (thread and spring missing).

I took a number of photos and compiled them into the attached file. I hope it will may be reviewed by you and anyone else that would appreciate the information I've conveyed about the museum's exhibits as well as my exhibit.

I hope that in the future, for the purpose of portraying telegraphy, I or other sources knowledgeable of the subject may be consulted. I'm disappointed that when it

came to telegraphy in the Civil War Pathways, a number of prominent details were inaccurate. If there may be an opportunity to correct some of the information, I would be glad to assist. The most prominent item would be to change the listed code from Continental/International Morse Code, to Morse/American Morse Code. Secondly, if some Civil War period instruments may be exhibited, I would be glad to offer same. On the website, if the reference to Republicans could be changed to telegraphers, that would be great.



Nice encouragement to "send" Continental (International Morse) Code, developed in Europe and first used in America when the wireless telegraph was introduced after 1900. Alfred Vail and Samuel Morse invented Morse Code in 1836-38; it was used on all American telegraph circuits and is not shown.



Telegraph key made between 1860 and 1879." This is a bug (semiautomatic keyer) from the early 1900's, in "parts" condition.

I look forward to assisting with Washington State Historical Society activities in the future! I hope telegraph activities may develop for September and October, in keeping with the sesquicentennial of the telegraph's arrival in Olympia in early September, 1864, and in Seattle in late October, 1864. The November 11th statehood 125th anniversary in the rotunda sounds wonderful. For November 11, I would like to suggest having the best living Morse telegrapher in the state, that resides at Ritzville, be the working telegrapher. He is about 82 and a friend of mine; we telegraph well between our respective stations. Perhaps I or someone else could be on the other end of the wire, up one or two levels on the rotunda balcony, and communicate to the station down on the floor of the rotunda.

I'm also attaching a compilation of primary source accounts of the telegraph construction in 1864; a resume of sorts for my antique technology interests; a portfolio of much of my Civil War era telegraph equipment; and a brief bio paragraph on my Civil War era telegraph interests. I hope this information

may help in understanding my specializations.

*Best Regards,
Kevin Saville
FX Chapter*

March 11th

Thank you for the membership packet and for the beautiful MTC Certificate plus the recent issues of *Dots & Dashes*. (These were sent by our International Secretary-Treasurer Cindy.) I look forward to reading them.

I had the pleasure of reading a sample copy of *Dots & Dashes* on line and found it well written and very interesting. I have also been on the MTC website and found it helpful. I am also a member of the Yahoo group "slowspeedwire" and have downloaded the Morse KOB. I have been fortunate to have corresponded with other members of MTC and have found them to be very helpful to a Newbie." This is indeed a wonderful group!

Kent Berglund

MORSE DEMOS

This article was written by Don Andrus of the Florida FX Chapter with his intention of motivating each of us to participate more.

What's involved in doing a Morse demonstration? If the chapter happenings section of D&D provides a general idea of what the many chapters of the MTC are doing, let's face it, this isn't very encouraging. We can hope that many more chapters and individual members are doing Morse demonstrations and presentations than are currently being reported to D&D.

Certainly, there are good reasons why a Morse Telegraph Club member cannot participate in a Morse demonstration, health being the main reason. Health issues catch many of us soon or later, but there are other reasons that just don't hold water.

For example, someone saying they are not proficient at Morse any longer, does not hold water. Why should that matter? A demonstration is not a contest. It's a demonstration of how messages were sent by Morse telegraph. A key, sounder, and a battery will put you in business. Remember that you are demonstrating how the telegraph system operated, how individual letters were formed and sent, explaining the technique of learning to recognize the rhythm of individual characters, all to folks who have little or no knowledge of this historic communications system. If you can tap out their name on a key, they will be impressed.

Ask any MTC member who has done a Morse demonstration!

Although it is fun to do Morse demonstrations with other MTC members, one can easily work alone. Having a code chart handy, one with large print, really helps. Explain how, demonstrate how, and then ask a youngster or adult to try sending a dot, then a dash, then a letter, or perhaps the first letter of their name. This will make their experience much more memorable and their appreciation of your talent greater. Where else will they have such an ideal opportunity? You will have passed on the simple basics of this historic technology to new generations in a short, one-on-one experience that they are sure to remember.

So come on guys and gals, proficient or not, if you haven't been involved in a Morse demonstration lately, get out there and give it a try. Start simple with a key and sounder or KOB and a battery. Show your grand kids, friends, neighbors, even strangers how the Morse telegraph worked. You will be amazed at the interest you generate. In this ever expanding hi-tech era, demonstration the simple, effective method messages were once sent instantaneously over long distances will draw more interest than you may think. You might even want to do it again!

THE MURDOCK TRAIN DISASTER

*This harrowing true story was written for readers of Dots & Dashes
by MTC member Howard Eskridge K9GYI of Tuscola, Illinois.*

Labor Day 2013 marked the 30th anniversary of the Murdock, Illinois derailment, a fire and explosion series for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The Eastbound B&O Extra 4032 had picked up eleven cars at the chemical plant complex at Ficklin, IL, just west of Tuscola, IL. These cars would be the basis of the incident.

The cars consisted of two dryflow cars of polyethylene plastic pellets, two tank cars of sulfuric acid, two tank cars of denatured alcohol, one tank car of bonded alcohol, three tank cars of isobutene, and one tank car of propane. These cars were numbers 9-19 in the train.

About 3:30 PM on Friday afternoon September 2, 1983, a security guard at the USI Chemical plant monitored a railroad radio transmission stating that there had been a derailment and ensuing fire at Murdock, and that the cars were those that had been picked up at Ficklin, the USI shipping point. A response team from USI immediately left for the incident.

Initial reports from early witnesses stated that coal cars were burning and sulfuric acid was on fire. The coal cars were the plastic pellet cars and sulfuric acid does not burn with a flame.

From almost ten miles away, the response team could see a plume of dark smoke developing. While enroute to the incident, the USI Traffic Department verified the USI cars on the train, their contents, and volumes and weights.

Responders from the Murdock Station of the Newman Fire Protection District were the first emergency responders on the scene. Realizing that their resources were not going to be adequate for the magnitude of the incident, they withdrew from the derailment site.

The derailment site was approximately a quarter mile east of the Murdock underground coal mine. Adjacent to the site was a shallow pond. Next to the pond was a dragline crane used to dredge the pond.

The crew from the train was together at the mine site and provided way bills to responders indicating commodity and location within the train.

As time passed, responses came from the

Newman Fire Protection District, from the Douglas County Sheriff's Office, the Illinois State Police, Douglas County ESDA, mine safety personnel, the B&O trainmaster, and the Illinois Department of Transportation as well as the shipper's response team.

A forward operations command post was established west of the mine site. As time progressed, it became obvious that the situation was going to worsen before it improved. The fire involving the polyethylene and alcohol increased in intensity. The propane tanker began periodic venting through its relief valve.

As the fire grew and the venting became more frequent, the decision was made to have the Department of Transportation in conjunction with law enforcement agencies to temporarily shut down U.S. Route 36, which paralleled the tracks a half mile to the south.

At 6:36 PM the propane experienced thermal failure, commonly known as a BLEVE. Pieces of the exploding tank car went in multiple directions. One section hit the boom of the drag line crane sitting next to the tracks, severing the boom from the crane body. The impact was so rapid and massive that the tracks on the crane did not move.

The largest section of the propane car came to rest 3630 feet from the derailment. This believed to still be the world record for launching a LPG vessel!

Fires continued to grow as more alcohol and polyethylene spilled from the cars. Then one of the isobutene cars began venting from excessive pressure. At 9:58 PM it experienced thermal failure, providing the second massive fireball cloud of the evening. There was one report of the fireball being seen from 60 miles away.

The wreckage continued to burn for 24 hours. Following the burn out, cleanup of the scene began.

This incident had produced two massive explosions and subsequent fireballs. The first explosion resulted in a world's record for tank trajectory. Yet, due to calm heads and knowledge of the situation there were no injuries. All of the

CHARITABLE DEDUCTIONS AND THE MORSE TELEGRAPH CLUB

When the Morse Telegraph Club was founded, our activities were primarily of a fraternal nature. Members gathered for meetings and banquets to discuss old times and some chapters even rented current loops from the phone company to link their private residences together via telegraph. Over the past decade or two, the mission of MTC has evolved significantly. While a fraternal component remains, we are much more active in the field of historic preservation and public education. Members have built numerous museum exhibits throughout the United States and Canada. We participate in Civil War encampments. We donate telegraph instruments to public institutions for use in exhibits and present talks to historical societies, clubs and similar organizations.

In 2013, it became necessary to sort out a variety of tax issues for the club. As a result, your International President used the opportunity to request a change in tax status from the United States Internal Revenue Service. Formerly, MTC was classified as a 501(c)(7) non-profit organization, which essentially defined us as a social or fraternal club. Perhaps the most common example of this type of classification is the "country club."

Under this former status as a social club, MTC could accept donations, but these donations were not deductible on the donor's individual income tax return. Additionally, this status made it impossible for MTC to accept gifts, grants and similar financial assistance for its historical projects. Worse yet, those volunteers who spent their own money to travel to historical events or projects benefitting the public could not deduct their mileage, lodging, or other expenses associated with this type of public outreach.

Because of these limitations, we asked the Internal Revenue Service to change our classification to that of a 501(c)(3) charity. This offers many advantages, particularly for our most active MTC members. Consider these hypothetical examples:

The Telegraph Talk: MTC member Sam Morse must travel to present a talk to the local Railroad Historical Society. His automobile mileage is now deductible at the charitable rate. If he stops at Office Max to run off 50 photocopies of a handout for the talk, this expense is also deductible on his individual form 1040.

The Telegraph Demonstration: MTC member Al Vail is assisting the National Park Service at its annual Civil War Encampment. This requires an overnight stay at a nearby hotel, several meals and auto mileage. All of these expenses are now deductible.

The Donation: As you will learn elsewhere in *Dots & Dashes*, MTC has established a storage facility for donated items. These items will be made available for museum projects, temporary exhibits, and, we hope, the eventual establishment of a permanent, lasting legacy in the form of a telegraph museum. Effective with tax year 2013, the donors of these items may deduct the value of these items on their individual tax return. In keeping with this new policy, specific professional standards for accession, documentation and record-keeping are being put in place to protect the interests of the club.

What is not deductible? Obviously, the social component is not deductible for the individual member. For example, getting together with a few fellow MTC members for a cup of coffee or visiting the local ham radio swap meet looking for telegraph instruments are not deductible activities. Likewise, our Morse Day banquets are fraternal in nature and not deductible because they do not benefit the public. Therefore, the litmus test for deductibility of an expense is related to the public interest. Therefore, if an activity is conducted under the banner of the Morse Telegraph Club, and its purpose is public education and/or historic preservation, reasonable personal contributions may be deducted. Likewise, if one donates several of his personal instruments to the club for use in current or future museum exhibit, this is likewise deductible.

As with any tax issue, be sure to keep good records. This means a separate file containing the receipts associated with the event. Likewise, it would be wise to keep a record showing the purpose of the event. For example, if you are asked to demonstrate telegraphy at Civil War re-enactment, it would be wise to retain a copy of the correspondence requesting your presence on behalf of the Morse Telegraph Club.

Questions about tax deductions are best left to your accountant. However, your International President will do his best to answer any inquiries you may have that pertain specifically to the Morse Telegraph Club.

CHAPTER NEWS

Washington-Baltimore WA Chapter



On *February 1st*, three of the WA Chapter members provided a one day telegraph demonstration, talking to hundreds of visitors at the HAM radio “Frostfest” in Richmond, Virginia. This annual event has been very successful for the Morse Telegraph Club for the past four years. Manning the MTC booth at Frostfest were Hubert Jewell, Hubert’s daughter Cindy Galyen, and your editor Jim Wilson. Hubert currently serves as MTC President of the Washington-Baltimore Chapter; Cindy currently serves as our MTC International Secretary-Treasurer and in addition to serving as editor of *Dots & Dashes* journal, Jim also currently serves as the WA Secretary-Treasurer.

Each year, “Frostfest” offers a great opportunity to tell hundreds of visitors about the Morse Telegraph Club with its goal of preserving Morse telegraphy. Many of the people who stopped by had stories of their own about their work as telegraphers or as railroad employees. Dozens of sample copies of *Dots & Dashes* were also given away to interested visitors.

On *March 11th*, two “WA” Chapter members presented a history of the telegraph as well as the story of communications on the railroad to about 45 members of the Albemarle Amateur Radio Club in central Virginia. Hubert Jewell described his life experiences working for the RF&P Railroad as a telegrapher and later as a railroad communications agent and finally as a member

of the U.S. National Transportation and Safety Board (NTSB), analyzing train wrecks. Jim retold the wonderful almost magical story of Samuel Morse and Alfred Vail as they invented the electric telegraph in their laboratory in Morristown, New Jersey.

The Albemarle Amateur Radio Club boasts about 160 members. They have an excellent web site at AlbemarleRadio.org.



Florida Chapter

The annual Florida Christmas Remembered event at the Pioneer Arts Settlement, Barberville, FL occurred too late in December to be included in the previous report of chapter activities. The biggest attraction at this event was the transmission of “Santagrams” for the younger visitors. Some of these wish lists would appear to put Santa to the test. One young boy asked Santa to bring him a brother his own age, while a little girl asked for “a baby doll and a stick of salami.” The event drew huge crowds and provided ample opportunity for chapter members to demonstrate the use of the telegraph instruments in the restored Pierson depot on the grounds of the Arts Settlement.

Early January found two chapter members portraying U.S. Signal Corps soldiers from World War II during the annual Save Our History Antique Show in Pompano Beach, FL. The chapter members demonstrated both land-line and wireless telegraphy from the WW I era.

The annual Folk Festival held Jan 25th at the Pinellas County Historical Society’s Heritage Village in Largo provided another excellent venue, in this case the restored Sulphur Springs Depot, for demonstrating the American Morse telegraph. Both weather and attendance were excellent and

CHAPTER NEWS *continued*

many visitors had the opportunity to try their hand at the key of the newly installed interactive Morse telegraph display and learn more about the history and significance of the telegraph and its use on the railroads of North America.

Florida Chapter members set up a display of a typical railroad telegraph office of the early 1900s at the Museum of Discovery and Science, Fort Lauderdale, in conjunction with the model train exhibit of that same era set up by the Florida Citrus Model Train Society. Chapter members were appropriately dressed for the time period and were kept busy all day, demonstrating the telegraph equipment and answering questions regarding the role of the telegraph in railroading in the early 1900s.

Two Florida Chapter members were in the old Trilby depot, located on the grounds of the Pioneer Florida Museum, Dade City, FL for the Florida Farm Festival annual event. The Trilby depot was the first of several in which the chapter has installed an interactive Morse telegraph display which allows visitors to try their hand at sending Morse code. A bit of excitement was added to the day when a two horse team broke loose from their load and their handler and ran full speed through the watching crowd. Fortunately, the horses were caught before anyone was injured. An interesting visitor was a retired telegrapher from the British Eastern Cable and Telegraph Company, the system that enabled the British to maintain contact with their distant colonies for many years. He had been a "two key" operator, one for dots the other for dashes, at several posts in distant parts of the world.

The annual Civil War Heritage Days event, held at Fort Zachary Taylor in Key West always draws a large number of Civil War re-enactors and an even larger number of spectators. Three Florida Chapter members were among the re-enactors, portraying members of the U. S. Military Telegraph Corps and demonstrating Civil War telegraphy, including wire-tapping which always draws considerable interest.

The annual Model Train Show, sponsored by the Henry B. Plant Railroad Historical Society, Plant City, FL, always attracts a large number of visitors, many of whom are interested in the role of the telegraph in the development of the railroads in North America. This year was no exception

and the two Florida Chapter members on hand were kept busy all day answering questions and demonstrating the displayed telegraph equipment. One visitor was a member of the board of directors of the organization restoring Tampa (FL) Union Station who asked the chapter to provide an interactive telegraph display in the historic railroad display now under construction. The Chapter will work with the organization to provide the display.

For the fourth consecutive year, the Florida Chapter's Southern Telegraph Company's field office was one of the main attractions at the annual Florida Cracker Days event at Rainbow Springs State Park, near Dunnellon, FL. Visitors were given the opportunity to try their hand at the key, learn about the difference and reason for the two codes, and have their names printed in Morse on the tape register, giving them a souvenir of their visit. Civil War era wire tapping was demonstrated, and Oscar, the lively mechanical raccoon in the cooking pot, put a smile on many faces, young and old. (A photo of Oscar can be found in the Album section of the Chapter's website www.floridamorse.com/album.)

One visitor was a young woman who was severely hearing impaired. The wire tapping demonstration involves the actual tapping of an overhead telegraph line with an earth return, as was done during the American Civil War. Using an 1860s era pocket key (reproduction) with a vintage bayonet as a ground rod and a large clip that attaches to the single, low hanging overhead telegraph line, the small sounder in the pocket key suddenly comes to life with the rhythm of the "What Hath God Wrought" American Morse message, sent from a hidden Morse code generator located at the far end of the line. The young woman was holding the pocket key as the bayonet was shoved into the ground and the lead clipped to the overhead wire. There was a look of surprise and delight on her face as the sounder came to life with the rhythm of the Morse code message and she was able to feel it through her hands. Moments like these are among the rewards members receive from participating in these public demonstrations.

“30” SILENT KEYS

News of our brothers and sisters who have closed the key



Twin City MS Chapter

EARL J. HOLCOMB, age 98, passed away on February 12, 2014. Mr. Holcomb was a long time Saint Paul, Minnesota funeral director and was a licensed ham radio operator.

Thanks to Charles Roark, secretary-Treasurer of the MS Chapter for this brief notice.

JOSEPH C. SCHOENBERG, age 92, died on November 26, 2013. He was born in 1921, hired on as a telegrapher on the SOO Line Railroad on November 13, 1940. Joseph worked at many stations until going into the Army in WWII. Joe was broken in as a train dispatcher on the Central of Georgia Railroad while in a Railroad Battalion. Then he served as a train dispatcher, moving both French and German trains until the war ended. In 1946, Joseph was promoted to train dispatcher on the SOO Line. He worked in Gladstone, MI and Enderlin, ND and Thief River, MN, retiring in 1980 as a dispatcher in Shoreham, MN.

Thanks again to Charles Roark of the MS Chapter for this information.

HARVEY G. TESKE, age 85, of New Hope, MN passed away on October 3, 2013. He retired as Chief Train Dispatcher on the Milwaukee Road Railroad in the mid 1980's.

Thanks again to Charles Roark for this brief notification.

Montreal-Ottawa GO Chapter

ROSS E. NASON of Central Blissville, NB passed away on December 11, 2013 after a long battle with lung cancer. Ross worked for the Canadian Pacific Railroad as assistant agent and operator in New Brunswick and Quebec, and then transferred to the Chief Dispatcher's office, where he retired after 40 years of service.

Thanks to Roly Lauriault of the "GO" Chapter for this information.

C.D. Combs Memorial FN Chapter

BILL MAGNUSSON, age 91, died on December 29, 2013 at the Grand Island Veterans Home. He was born in Ames, NE on June 7, 1922. Bill graduated

from North Bend High School in 1938. Next he earned his Bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska Lincoln in 1942 plus completed some engineering graduate work at the University of William and Mary in Virginia.

In September 1942, Bill enlisted in the Army at Fort Crook, NE. He then served with the 95th Infantry Division, Headquarters Company, 5th Battalion, 377 Infantry Regiment. Bill was on Omaha Beach on D Day plus 99 and served in Northern France, Rhineland, and Central Europe. He was honorably discharged with the rank of staff sergeant on November 19, 1945.

April 17, 1946 was the lucky day that he married Mary Connolly at the Saint Paul Methodist church in Lincoln.

Bill learned the landline American Morse code from his father, who worked for the railroad. Then he learned the International Morse code from the Dodge Institute at Valparaiso, IN and the U.S. Army Signal Corps. He began his railroad career as an agent/operator for the Union Pacific Railroad at Saint Edwards, NE. then took a job at Schyler. In 1949, he and Mary moved to Central City where he served the Union Pacific Railroad at Clarks, the Central City. He retired after 42 years of railroad service.

Bill was active in their church, the VFW and other Central City community organizations, including his service as an elected member of the City Council of Central City.

Bill will be missed by his wife Mary and by their three daughters, nine grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

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

WILBUR KOCH, age 84, of Ute Iowa, passed away unexpectedly on April 7, 2013 at the Health Center in Onawa, Iowa. He was born on October 6, 1928 in Sutherland, IA, one of four children born to Raymond and Nora Koch. Wilbur graduated from Gaza La High School in 1947. Following graduation, he played baseball for a time then became employed as a telegrapher with the Illinois Central Railroad. Telegraphy was a skill that he was able to recall throughout his life.

On September 20, 1951, Wilbur joined the U.S. Marine Corps, where he became stationed stateside as an instructor of telegraphy. He was honorably discharged on September 19, 1953 and returned to his job with the railroad.

Wilbur and Lillian Schwebach were married at the Little Brown Church in Nashua, IA. The following years brought them two sons, Jeff and Randy. After testing out many locations, the family settled in Cleghorn, IA. Wilbur retired from his railroad career after 25 years of service. In 1968 the family moved to Charter Oak, IA where he took other employment, mostly with the Carter Oak and Ute Schools.

Wilbur was active in the American Legion, the Lutheran church, and was a member of the Monona County Planning and Zoning Commission. He loved sports. For twenty-six years, Wilbur and his son Jeff attended every Big 8/12 tournament, no matter where they were held. After their son Randy became a member of the Iowa State University football team (1975-78), Wilbur became a season ticket holder, rooting for the Cyclone football and basketball games for over 20 years.

Wilbur will be missed by Lillian, his wife of 55 years, and their two sons Jeff and Randy, and their four grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

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

JOHN WERTISH, age 91, passed away on March 2, 2014 in Renville, MN. John was born on July 24, 1922 on their family farm at Olivia, MN. He attended country school and graduated from Olivia High School. Then he worked for several years for area farmers. During WWII, he served in the U.S. Navy, 1943-45. Next he became a lifelong employee of the Milwaukee Railroad as a signalman. He began his railroad career at Saint Paul, Minnesota and eventually worked 45 years, ending at Aberdeen, South Dakota.

On June 19, 1947, John married Margaret Mary Mangan at Elkton, SD. They made their homes in Saint Paul, MN, in Webster, SD, and Aberdeen, SD. Margaret died in 2005 after 58 years of marriage. Following Margaret's death, John moved back to his childhood home town of Olivia to be near his family. There, he lived in a beautiful 30 room congregate living apartment, where residents live mostly independently. His new favorite pastime became playing cards and bingo. Two heart attacks and macular degeneration put

a damper on his enjoyment of life, causing John to move to a nursing home in Renville, MN.

John was a faithful member of the Catholic Church, was a member of the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen, the Kiwanis and Elks Clubs. He and Margaret loved their Siberian husky dog.

Thanks to Richard Behrens of the CD Combs Chapter for this interesting information.

Members at Large GC Chapter

JEAN-PAUL PAQUIN of Saint Albans, Vermont passed away in January 2014. At present, no other details are known.

Thanks to the daughter of Jean-Paul for this brief notification.

THOMAS ROGERS, age 74, of Hampshire, IL was killed when he fell from his radio antenna tower on December 1, 2013.

Thanks to Karen Rogers, daughter of Thomas, for this brief notification. "He was a good man," stated Karen.

Hugh Braese SQ Chapter

DAVID R. PASSARD, age 73, of Van Nuys, CA passed away on September 27, 2013. David was a longtime railroad engineer and an enthusiastic collector of railroad memorabilia. He began his railroad career as a diesel fireman with the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad in the late 1950's. Later he served as an engineer with the Southern Pacific, subsequently the Union Pacific, retiring in 2004.

Following retirement, David switched full time to his avocation of collecting railroad equipment. His passion was described in American Heritage magazine in 2009. "The house, garage, yard and outbuildings were crammed with antique locomotive generators, lights, bulbs and books stockpiled over four decades."

Passard started his railroad collection while still a teen, growing up in Antioch, California. After graduating from high school in the mid 1950's, David went to work for a can maker across the street from a locomotive laden scrap yard. David's brother Jim stated that David would finish a shift at the can manufacturing company then walk across the street to liberate locomotive fixtures like gauges and whistles.

Some of David's massive collection was used to restore Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad's

Number 315. An avid live steamer, Passard was known for his Aster GS-4 in Southern Pacific "Daylight" livery. He advised Accucraft Trains Company on developing a variety of small scale live steamers.

Thanks to International President Jim Wades and to Jim Passard, David's brother for this information. Portions of this information also come from "The Cupola View," written by Editor Dave Cole of Pacifica, California.

Washington-Baltimore Chapter

BALLARD L. JEWELL, age 91, passed away on December 27, 2013. He was born on November 25, 1922 in Roanoke, Virginia. Following high school, Ballard attended the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, VA, and then Randolph Macon College in Ashland, VA, then graduated from the University of



Chicago in Chicago, Illinois with a Master's Degree in Business Administration.

Ballard was a third generation Morse Telegrapher. He began work in 1939 on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad at Richmond, Virginia (the capital of Virginia). Ballard rose through the ranks to Dispatcher and Assistant Chief Dispatcher. Then he transferred to Baltimore, Maryland and thence to Cleveland, Ohio using computer programs to determine the effect on traffic by the removal of one track from double track territory.

In 1945 at the risk of losing his seniority, Ballard joined the Army. He saw no action in WWII, but as a reservist he was later called for the Korean War. During the Korean War, Ballard was injured by shrapnel wound; for this he received the Purple Heart. While hiding behind trees for cover, holding a rifle in the snow for months while getting shot at, Ballard commented, "I never did get warm." Ballard also contracted Malaria while serving in

the Pacific area.

Ballard retired from the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad in the early 1980's and returned to Virginia. He was married to Dr. Mae Gwendolyn Sirjou, who preceded him in death. They had no children. Ballard passed away at the Imperial Plaza assisted living facility in Richmond.

Thanks to Hubert Jewell, brother of Ballard Jewell, for this information. (Hubert currently serves MTC as President of the Washington-Baltimore Chapter.)

On a personal note, I especially appreciated Ballard. Wearing Civil War attire, Ballard and I represented the Morse Telegraph Club over the years as we educated and entertained the public during numerous telegraph demonstrations. Our last demo together was about two years ago. Ballard was a thoughtful and intelligent man. I will certainly miss my old friend, Ballard Jewell.
~Jim Wilson

Winnipeg WG Chapter

HAROLD EUGENE OMAN, age 84, passed away on February 19, 2014 at his residence in Grand Marais, MB. Gene was born in Carberry, MB on January 3, 1930 and learned his telegraphy in Winnipeg. He started work for the Canadian National Railway as a telegraph operator on May 10, 1952. Gene retired after 37 years of service as a Service Representative. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Monelle, by their son Eric, and daughters Genelle and Dorrilee and two grandchildren.

Thanks to Dan Kolesaich of the WG Chapter for this information.

Thomas Edison TD Chapter

NANCY KNOTT, age 58, passed away on March 2, 2014. Nancy, WZ8C, of Metamora, Michigan was the former editor of WorldRadio Magazine and she was a world renowned Morse code preservationist. Nancy is likely best remembered as the member of the United Kingdom based Morse code preservationist group known as FISTS CW Club. She operated the FISTS booth each year at the Dayton Hamvention and was a speaker at several seminar sessions over the years.

Professionally, Nancy was a field representative for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Survivors include her husband, Tim Lang.

Thanks to Al Skornicka, Secretary-Treasurer

of the TD Chapter for this information and for more details from the Amateur Radio Newsline.

Saskatoon KN Chapter

EDWARD GEORGE BERRYERE, age 83, passed away on March 14, 2014. Ed was born in Neudorf, Saskatchewan on June 19, 1931. He spoke mostly German during his early childhood. He attended school in Neudorf and later in Melville, Saskatchewan.

Edward left high school at age 17 to become a call boy and then a telegraph operator on the Canadian National Railways, where he worked for a total of twenty years.

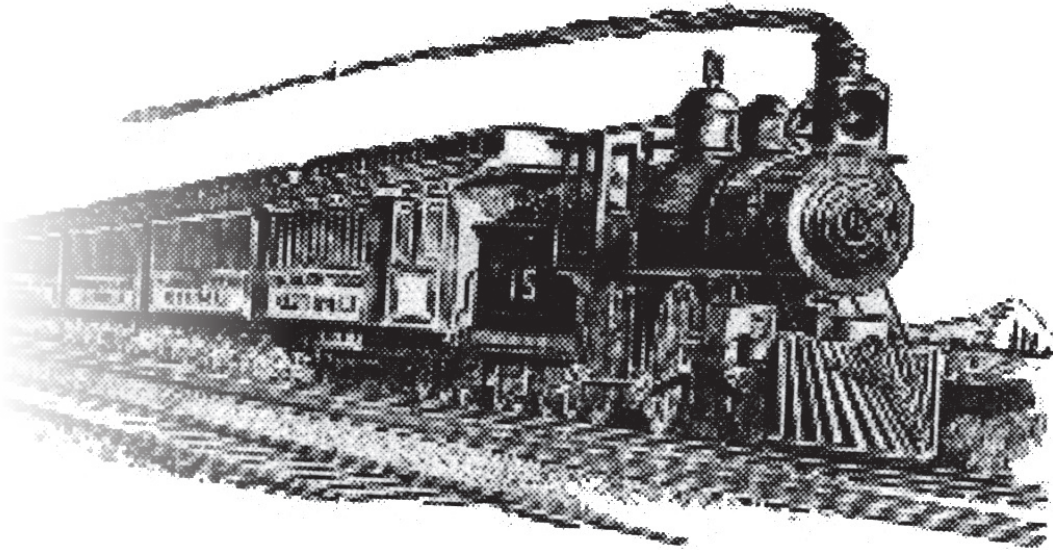
During the 1960's, Ed completed high school by correspondence and later graduated from the University of Saskatchewan with a Bachelor of Arts in History and later with a Bachelor of Education degree. He became an elementary school teacher and then a school principal with the Saskatoon Public Board of Education.

Ed was active in several organizations: a member of the board of directors of the teacher's credit Union, the Elstow Masonic Lodge, the Shrine Club, and the Eastern star. He was a long time active member of the Morse Telegraph Club, KN Chapter, and a lifelong amateur radio operator with the call sign VE5GE.

Ed and his wife of 62 years, Sylvia, traveled throughout Canada and the United States, plus visited the United Kingdom, continental Europe, and China. Ed and Sylvia enjoyed holidaying at their cabin at Weyakwin Lake I northern Saskatchewan and at their mobile home in Apache Junction, Arizona.

Sylvia and their son Clive as well as three sisters and two brothers survive and will cherish their memories of Edward.

Thanks to Len Solomon, KN Chapter President, for this information. Len adds, "We will truly miss a great friend and colleague."



DO YOU KNOW?

Has the telegraph been invented on any other planet?

The future is still under investigation. NASA's Kepler space telescope has identified so many earth-like planets that the estimation is currently 11 billion planets similar to planet earth in our Milky Way galaxy. Multiply this figure by the 200 billion other galaxies seen in our night sky and the total is mind boggling.

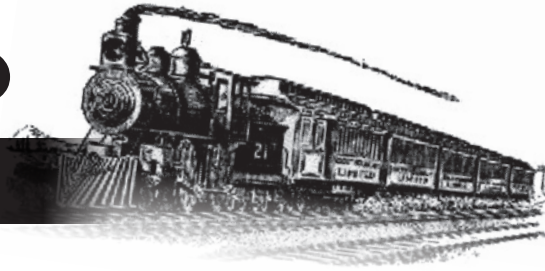
Of the estimated trillions of other "earths," it is statistically likely that millions of these planets are inhabited by people who are as technologically advanced as us or even more so.

It is likely that the first practical use of electricity by beings on any planet will be a simple on off switch called the telegraph. Someday we may confirm the invention of the telegraph on other planets.

Sources: Astronomy Magazine (April 2014) and Jim's imagination.

WELCOME ABOARD

News of Our New Morse Telegraph Club Members



Members at Large GC Chapter

JAMES P. STEWART of Milton, Florida was born on December 15, 1934. His amateur radio call sign is W4AGL and he invites you to contact him at W4AGL@EREC.net.

Welcome to MTC, James.

CLEMENS T. BRZOZNOWSKI, Jr. of Westminster, California was born on October 30, 1938. His amateur radio call sign is W0MEC. He invites you to contact him at clementtetomas@verizon.net.

Come join the fun at MTC, Clemens.

MICHAEL P. MURPHY of Dayton, Ohio was born on May 22, 1961. His amateur radio call sign is KA8ABR. Mike invites you to contact him at murph77@clearwire.net. He states, "I do have the loop interface working with an old railroad 20 ohm sounder and I have been copying the welcome message and trying to pick up American Morse using the Morse KOB program from less." His telegraph sine is "MM."

Welcome to MTC Mike. You are well on your way to discovering a new and exciting world of telegraph communications.

RICHARD LINDER of Fayetteville, North Carolina was born on September 5, 1946. Richard is an amateur radio operator with the call sign WB7OND. Richard invites you to meet him via his e-mail at WB7OND@earthlink.net.

JAMES E. KESSLER of River Junction, MI was born on March 15, 1943. He learned the International code from LP records in 1956, earned his amateur radio license in 1957 (KN8EXF) and worked for a Kalamazoo, Michigan radio and television shop. Jim invites you to contact him at jimkeesl@iserv.net.

Vancouver DI Chapter

BRUCE SIMS of Hazelton, BC joined on behalf of the Hazelton Secondary School Library. Bruce has an avid interest in the historical perspective of the telegraph. He is a member of the Hazelton Historical Society/Museum and he hopes to document Hazelton's claim to a wireless hub in days gone by.

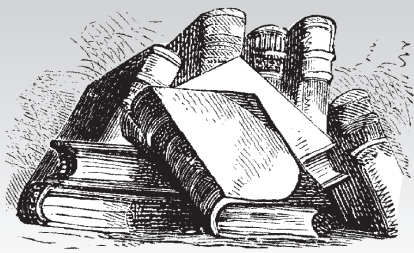
We send you a special welcome to you, Bruce, from MTC. Let us know if we can assist your quest to learn more about the history of the telegraph.

PETER L. OSTAPCHUK of Osceola, Indiana was born on October 17, 1947. He passed the 20 words per minute Morse code test to earn his Extra Class amateur radio license. The late Cecil Landoc, K9GIC, mentored Peter to accomplish this feat. Peter invites you to meet him via his e-mail address at N9SFX@sbcglobal.net.

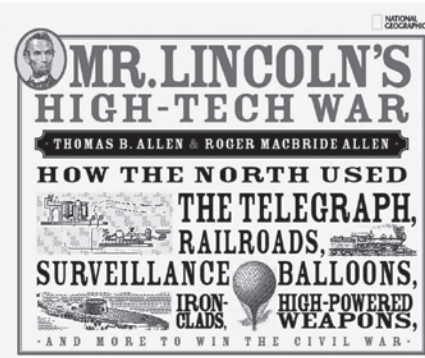
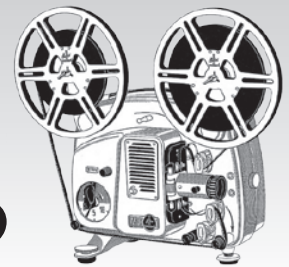
Welcome to MTC, Peter. You will be happy that you joined the fun.

KENT E. BERGLUND of Cary, Illinois was born on June 20, 1943. Kent invites you to learn more about him at kbergphd@hotmail.com.

Kent, by joining MTC, you made a wise decision; welcome!



J. Chris Hausler's
**BOOK & MOVIE
REVIEWS**



For this column I'm going to return once more to the U.S. Civil War with a review of a couple recent publications (So, sorry, no free downloads this time).

The first is a book titled, *Mr. Lincoln's High-Tech War* by Thomas B. Allen and Roger MacBride Allen, a father and son team. Although not available for free there is a web site associated with the book at www.mrlincolnshightechwar.com. The book is published by the National Geographic Society. It is a young persons book as it strives to educate children and young adults that the employment of "new technology", so prevalent today, is nothing new.

The subtitle of the book is *How the North used the Telegraph, Railroads, Surveillance Balloons, Iron-Clads, High Powered Weapons, and More to Win the Civil War*. It points out that Lincoln was born into the last generation of Americans who did not expect technology to ever change. As we all know at least some aspect of technology has been undergoing rapid change ever since. The book details the advancement of a number of new technologies as they were applied to the winning of the Civil War. The main text is annotated with sidebar articles, drawings and photographs to better explain and expand upon those efforts. Included at the end of the book is a bibliography as well as a list of on-line resources for further study. It is well done. So if you know of any young person studying the Civil War in school or just because of an interest in the war I can highly recommend this book. I can also recommend it for any young person who believes that the employment of new technologies is just a recent phenomenon. It will correct that misconception. It is available from a number of sources including Amazon. The ISBN is: 978-1-4263-0379-1.

The other publication I'm reviewing this time is a DVD of a PBS program titled *Lincoln @ Gettysburg*. This program first aired on PBS on November 19, 2013, exactly 150 years after the address was given by Lincoln at Gettysburg. The hour long program looks at both Lincoln's use of the telegraph to manage the war and the events of



the Gettysburg Address itself. It points out that as the Gettysburg Address was short, only 272 words, it was "telegraphic" in nature and thus could be quickly and

efficiently transmitted by telegraph. As a result the text of it spread around the country and even the world, printed in newspapers, as the program says, the "blogs" of the day, about as fast as it would using the modern technology of today. I have never seen a better, more correctly produced television documentary program relating to telegraphy. I can highly recommend it. It is available from the PBS store on-line and at least at this writing there is a web site offering a preview of it at www.pbs.org/program/lincoln-gettysburg.

That said, being a nitpicker for historical accuracy I do have a bit of whining to do. For one, most all of the instruments depicted are of designs developed after the Civil War by a number of years, some clearly from the 20th Century. There is one camelback key shown but I believe it too is of later design, typical of such keys you would find on practice instruments of the 1870's and 1880's. The E. F. Johnson local sounder shown in the program and in the photograph on the cover of the DVD case cannot be any earlier than the 1920's as the E. F. Johnson Company itself was founded in 1923. All this said, I do not think this takes

anything away from the program. The general audience won't know the difference and period correct instruments might actually look strange to modern eyes. The one thing for which I can at least mildly slap the producers around is that during the program, text representing telegrams plays across the screen and underneath the text is shown the dots and dashes of the code. Unfortunately they use International Morse Code for this display, not the American Morse Code which we all know would have been the code actually used. But given the scarcity of television programs which depict land line telegraphy correctly in any form and the excellence of the rest of this program, I choose to ignore this infraction and heartily endorse it. If you didn't catch it when originally broadcast, the DVD at about \$20 is well worth the cost. Enjoy!

The following book review is a guest entry from MTC member, John Green, KX4P

A GREAT WINTER READ - With the cold of winter firmly set in, it is a good time to get a cup of hot chocolate, settle into a quiet spot and read a good book. Here is one I just finished that I highly recommend: Erik Larson's *Thunderstruck*. This is a non-fiction adventure combining Scotland Yard's Chief Inspector Walter Dew with Guglielmo (Goo-ye-e-ail-mo) Marconi and his wireless telegraph. Reading this book describes a world famous murder (second only to Jack the Ripper), detailed account of 1910 style forensic science, two ocean liners racing across the Atlantic, and the whole world listening in to series of events through spark-gap wireless telegraphy communications. And all this just prior to The World War.

Of special delight to anyone interested in early wireless operation, you will be captivated to the detail of trans-Atlantic cable telegraphy and, of course, Marconi and his wireless apparatus. Read about the high-voltage keys, thunderous sounds and lightning sparks from the antennae (English spelling). And those antennas! Imagine the circular arrays of twenty two-hundred foot masts draped with "Umbrella" arrays consisting of miles of cable/wires! Wow - think of the sway in the wind storms and the ice buildup in winter! And 75,000 watts - really?

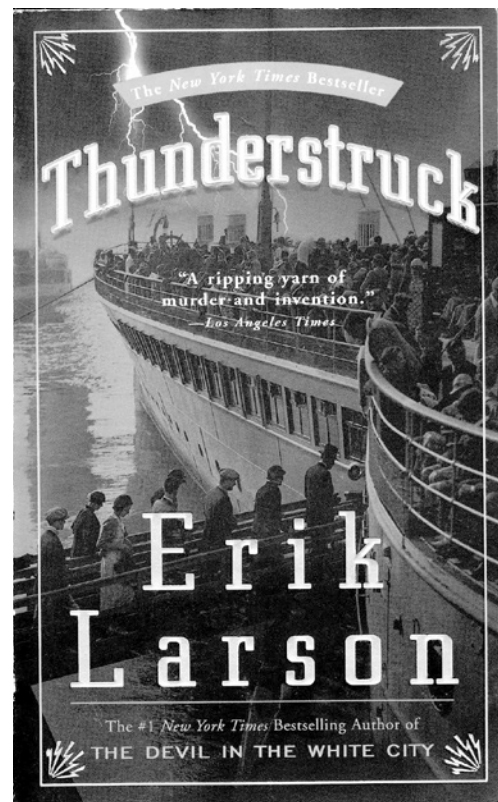
Physicists of the day ridiculed trans-Atlantic wireless because they theorized all electro-magnetic radiation traveled in straight lines like light. Once launched into the ether, radio transmissions would be limited in the distance

it could be useful due to the curvature of the earth. Marconi said later that he never paid much attention to the claims of every theory of Physics. At best theories are incomplete and subject to change, at worst they are simply not true.

Upon receiving the Nobel Prize, December 10, 1909, Marconi delivered a banquet speech stating, "I might mention that I have never studied Physics or electrotechnics in the regular manner, although as a boy I was deeply interested in those subjects." Also, "Many facts connected with the transmission of electric waves over great distances still await a satisfactory explanation." The description of his funeral in 1937 reveals contrasting aspects of his personality, rather sad for such a famous person.

Later in life he understood that a single horizontal wire, properly tuned, could easily outperform any of the colossal antenna structures he had ever erected. I am glad for that. As I write this little review I can report that, with 100 watts and a simple inverted V wire antenna, I have communicated with an amateur radio DX operation, FT5ZM, on Amsterdam Island in the southern Indian Ocean, 12,000 miles away, yes, the opposite side of the earth. And I did it using a telegraph key, Morse code, 100 watts and a simple wire antenna hanging in the tree just outside my warm attic room!

Get this book - you will enjoy it!



PUEBLO SALIDA CHAINING POLE LINE

by Ed Trump of Fairbanks, Alaska

I can tell a true story about open wire pole lines and how they can affect an open wire Carrier telephone system.

Along about 1970 or so, the D&RGW RR hired a salvage crew to go over the pole line between Pueblo and Salida, Colorado, a distance of about 96 miles. The tracks and pole line ran through the Royal Gorge, a very scenic area. This pole line had been built originally by the Western Union about 1890. Copper pairs for Dispatetcher telephone and railroad message telephone systems had been added in the 1930's and '40's.

All the old original unused iron wires were taken down, which included those on the second crossarm, and some refurbishments were done to the poles and top crossarms, leaving only the No 8 AWG hard-drawn copper pair on one end of the top arm and the hard-drawn copper message phone pair on the other end of the arm. The two big No. 6 BWG galvanized iron telegraph wires on the "pole pin" positions of the top arm were left as well. One of them was the old No. 1 Morse wire, still in use for time signals and general Morse BS'ing between the operators who could still use it in train order offices along the way. The large heavy iron wires helped preserve the mechanical integrity of the line.

After this line work, the RR intended to add a Lenkurt 45A carrier telephone system between Pueblo and Salida, using the copper message pair. Both copper pairs had been originally transposed for 3 kHz voice frequency only.

In due time, some nicely refurbished Lenkurt 45A carrier terminal equipment was installed at Pueblo and at Salida, with a repeater at Texas Creek, which was the nearest midpoint that had adequate access and power for the equipment. At the time Texas Creek (telegraph call "KG") was still an open train order office in this ABS territory.


Came the big day to fire up the new system.... and IT DID NOT WORK! Everybody was baffled as to why. I was the junior Telecomm Engineer in the Denver head office, and the "boss" Supt. of Communications Merrill F. Black sent me down to Pueblo to work with the Tel & Tel maintenance

guys and find out what was wrong.

The Lenkurt 45A open wire carrier telephone system was a twelve-channel vacuum tube system that operated in the frequency range from about 40 kHz up to 150 kHz. There were four "pilot" frequencies that were transmitted over the carrier pair of wires that were used for channel level regulation, 40 and 80 kHz in one direction, and 99 and 150 Khz in the other. I do not recall which was "east-west" and "west-east". The "east" terminal was at Pueblo Union depot, and the "west" terminal was at the Salida Depot. Repeater, as was mentioned was located at Texas Creek, which was about 65 miles west of Pueblo and about 32 miles east of Salida.

I had an idea that something goofy was going on with the transmission between terminals and repeater because the system would not regulate properly. Something appeared to be affecting the "pilot" frequencies. First order of business was to section the line, and then run a frequency response test in both directions over the line sections to see what that looked like. So, Section lineman Ed Mackey and I went to Texas Creek to the repeater location and Earl "Woody" Woodward remained at Pueblo to work with us.

We hauled the trusty Hewlett Packard 400D level meter and HP 200CD Variable Frequency Oscillator with us to Texas Creek, while Woody used his HP 200CD and 400D at Pueblo for the test signal equipment. We did not have a fancy Spectrum Analyzer in those days, so we had to send a test signal every 5 Khz at the normal pilot frequency signal level and plot the received levels on graph paper at the distant end. We arranged to do this on all four pilot frequencies, in both directions.

Immediately, we detected that the segment between Pueblo and Texas Creek had a very well defined "notch" at the 99 kHz point in the spectrum. No signal was getting through. We repeated the test between Texas Creek and Salida, Mackey and I went to Salida, and Woody went to Texas Creek. We found similar anomalies in the spectrum analysis of that section of line as well. 

The conclusion I came to was that the wire pair assigned to this system had some “resonant lengths” in it that severely attenuated the carrier system pilot signals. I packed up our test results and returned to Denver.

The boss called in the other Telephone engineers from Grand Jct and Salt Lake and we all had a discussion of this problem. When I explained what I thought was wrong and what would have to be done to fix it, there was some “dissent”..(damn smart-ass college kids anyway!...) When I hauled out the test data and showed what was going on in those line sections, they finally were convinced what the problem was...what to do to fix it?

The only answer of course, was to re-transpose that pair of wires so as to “flatten” the frequency response and let the carrier pilot frequencies pass as they should.

One problem: The original “chain record” (the measurement of the distance between each pole all the way from Pueblo to Salida) of that line had been lost. Not only that, but a considerable section of the line had been relocated during activity west of Pueblo along the Arkansas River, which changed the length of the line some miles.

A new transposition scheme could not be accurately worked out without this “chain record”, so the Boss said to me “Ok...You figured out what was wrong, now you go back down there and get

us a new chain record of that line so we can re-transpose it”.

Lineman Mackey and I and a helper spent the next three weeks walking the line every inch of the way from the Depot cable pole Pueblo to the Depot cable pole Salida, dragging a 200 foot surveyors chain and measuring/recording the footage between each pole. We recorded existing transpositions, any defects needing repair, all cable drops and boxes and all that. We used the line truck and motorcar, setting the motorcar out about as far west as we thought we could walk that day, and then driving the truck back to the starting point where we’d left off the day before.

Actually, in retrospect, it was sort of a fun period...Believe me, you REALLY get to see what the countryside is like when you walk over it on foot. It was summer, and the weather was generally really nice most of the time.

When we’d finished this task, I took the chain record back to Denver, and our Engineer/Draftsman Ron Jones got to work figuring out a new transpision scheme for the line. As soon as this was completed, the RR linegang was sent in to retranspose that message pair of wires, completing the job by early fall.

When the Lenkurt system was fired up again, it worked perfectly.

responding agencies worked together to make the incident a casualty-free event.

Of course, with any event, there are moments of reflection that provide a bit of comedy relief. The crew from the caboose of the train asked the shipper’s responders if they would get their luggage from the caboose during one of the responder’s trips in to evaluate the wreckage. While gathering the luggage, Trainmaster Jim Barlow was overheard on the caboose radio calling the train.

Knowing the train crew would not be able to hear him on their portable radios, the responder replied to Mr. Barlow. After explaining his presence in the

caboose and his purpose, Mr. Barlow wanted to know the prognosis of the situation. The responder told Mr. Barlow that he should be there in plenty of time to see a really big explosion.

Murdock was the first non-laboratory test of safety equipment that had been the topic of discussion for years. The shelf couplers, tank car head shields, and the thermal insulation applied to the pressurized tank cars all worked. The most important item that led to a successful incident was the cooperation between all the response agencies and entities.

HOUSE TRACK **Want Ad Section**

For Morse Telegraph Club Members

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 ½” floppy. MTC Members \$5.00, others \$10.00. Jim Farris. Contact info. (904) 277-9623.

WANTED: Re-enactors for Locust Grove, the Samuel Morse Historic Site in Poughkeepsie, NY. Please contact Andrew Stock, Curator of Education and Public Programs at a.stock@morsehistoricsite.org 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: 2014 Railroad Calendar. The Inland Empire Railway Historical Society offers a stylish 2014 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. 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 (705) 472-8860.

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: 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 ½ inches long by 1½ 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.

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

AVAILABLE: Telegraph equipment, bug, depot calendar, time tables and buttons. Contact Sarah Schweitzer in Billings, Montana at (406) 896-8598

AVAILABLE: Crests, “Order of Railroad Telegraphers” with emblem in the center, \$12 each. Email Mary Roy at terttu@shaw.ca or mail Mary at 3874 Winlake Crescent, Burnaby, BC V5A 2G5, telephone (604) 420-1292.

AVAILABLE: October 1926 Railroad Telegrapher magazine, an Order of Railroad Telegraphers publication. This magazine includes union news and ads from Vibroplex, Bunnell, and other telegraph makers. Also available is the May 1959 Railroad Telegrapher with news from 11 MTC chapters. Contact Gene Wood at 104 Sunset, Madill, Oklahoma 73446, phone (580) 795-3724.

AVAILABLE: The Morse Express Christmas Key is a fully functional telegraph key made by GHD Telegraph Key in Sendai City, Japan. This key is fully adjustable with precision pin bearings at the trunion and it has two miniature binding posts. Lever tension is provided by an unusual but very effective piston compression spring that is located forward of the trunion post. The contacts are hard silver and the distinctive triangular base is finished in mirror polished hard chrome. The knob is hand-turned ebony and there are three small anti-static rubber feet on the bottom for stability. The 2013 Christmas Key measures 1 3/16 x 2 inches and weighs just over 2 ounces. The price is \$89.95 plus shipping & handling. To see and to purchase this unique telegraph key go to www.MorseX.com.

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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29150 Windsor Road,
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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 four current web sites that I find useful:

www.arnewline.org
www.usrepeaters.com
www.qth.com
www.qrz.com

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