



# Dots&Dashes

*What*

*Hath*

*God*

*Wrought*

The Official Publication of the Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

Vol. 40, Issue No. 1 • Winter 2014-2015

## TELEGRAPH INVENTED ON OTHER PLANETS!

*By Jim Wilson*

No, this is not an April fool's joke. Yes, this headline is thirty years ahead of its time. While this announcement sounds like science fiction, here are the facts. Earth based radio telescopes have already identified 1,779 confirmed and 3,215 candidate "earths" (Source: Jet Propulsion Laboratory at the California Institute of Technology, December 2014), and the SETI organization now estimates the existence of 10,000 to one million other planets with people living on them who are as technological advanced as we are.

Dr. Jill Tartar, spokesperson for SETI, the Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence, was here in Charlottesville, VA on October 27th to explain to a large audience the latest scientific findings. I

attended her lecture and snapped the attached photographs.

Using the famous Frank Drake formula, Dr. Tartar concluded that 10,000 to 1,000,000 other advanced civilizations exist who could communicate with us. Dr. Tartar predicts the first contact within the next twenty years.

Here is the background and reasoning. Recall that the electric telegraph was invented by Samuel Morse and Alfred Vail about 175 years ago. The telegraph key was a simple on-off switch and the sounder was a simple

*continued on  
page 5*

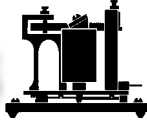
**ARE WE ALONE?**  
Searching for Intelligent Life Beyond Earth  
A FREE PUBLIC LECTURE BY  
DR. JILL TARTAR

**NRAO**

7:00 PM Start  
Refreshments and  
Souvenirs for sale in the  
lobby



# Dots & Dashes



The official publication of

## The Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

Jim Wilson - Editor, *Dots & Dashes*

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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 & 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 March 30<sup>th</sup>, 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](http://www.morsetelegraphclub.org)



## Sidewire

Comments from the  
Editor of *Dots & Dashes*

By **Jim Wilson**



While glancing at the calendar, I realized that ten years have passed since I became your *Dots & Dashes* editor. Yes, my first issue was for the winter of 2004-05. The front page article was about the NSA and Smithsonian collecting historic issues of *Dots & Dashes*.

This is the issue for the winter of 2014-15

Recall that John Barrows previously served as editor of *Dots & Dashes*. John was also the editor of his hometown newspaper in Helena, Montana. John loved publishing *Dots & Dashes*; he published it in a newspaper format. John relinquished editorship of *Dots & Dashes* due to work and family issues. He was very helpful at getting me accustomed to this new job. Thank you, John!

The year 2014 was a good one for members of the Morse Telegraph Club. Members participated in three major conferences plus numerous chapter telegraph demonstration events. During 2014, President Jim Wades also made progress on establishing a separate company to assist us with our membership address list, and he began the process of establishing a permanent telegraph museum. Whew! Thank you, Mr. President, for your work and dedication to the preservation of the craft of the electric telegraph. Recall that the electric telegraph was voted as one of the ten top inventions in human history. MTC keeps our craft alive and explains to younger generations the value of telegraphy.

The year 2015 brings the hope of more telegraph demonstrations by various members of our 29 MTC chapters. In May 2015 we plan to set up an MTC booth again at the "Dayton Hamvention" in Ohio. I hope that you are able to join the fun.

If you haven't already paid your 2015 annual dues, please put that on the top of your daily To-Do List. You are a valuable member of this historic organization and we don't want to lose you. That reminds me; I must put a renewal check in the mail for me and our son Matt.

If you have ideas or suggestions for exciting articles for upcoming issues of *Dots & Dashes*, please send these to me by letter or by e-mail. If your chapter is doing noteworthy things, send a picture and a brief story to share with our readers.

For 2015 I wish you good health, family love, and a purposeful life.

*Jim Wilson*

## President's Line

**Jim Wades, President**  
Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.



Now and then, I take the opportunity to visit some of the small railroad museums that are scattered throughout the US and Canada. Recently, I had the opportunity to visit one such depot at Hearne, Texas. The depot is beautifully restored and it contains some excellent, tasteful displays of railroad artifacts, including some telegraph related items. Included in the exhibits is a nice telegraph display, which, unfortunately, sits silently behind a glass window.

Perhaps the public doesn't notice it, but it is the lack of sound that seemed to strike me the most. The instruments are all there and there is even a nicely made wax figure designed to look like Lillian Griffin, the Southern Pacific Railroad Telegraph Operator who worked at the depot. It was nice to see the human interest connection as well as a setting in which the contributions of women to the telegraph profession are well represented. Yet, the lack of sound somehow seemed overwhelming.

The more I contemplate the history of telegraphy, the more I am convinced that one cannot fully understand the telegraph unless one hears Morse and sees the operator at work. Only then does the technology come to life. It is the human component which is essential to understanding the telegraph and, without it, the picture, like the art itself, is simply incomplete.

Obviously, there are fewer and fewer individuals who can effectively use American Morse on a telegraph circuit. Because of this,



we have developed some excellent computer-based tools to convey the concept of telegraphy without the human interface. While these tools may not entirely complete the picture, they do much to fill it in by allowing visitors to an exhibit to grasp the relative speed and efficiency of a Morse circuit operating at a typical "commercial" speed. The visitor can view the text of messages displayed on a computer screen and hear the sounders and relays operating in unison, reproducing crisp, clean Morse. All that is required is a reasonably small amount of imagination to envision an operator transcribing the traffic with a "stick" or a "mill."

Another tool we have deployed is the interactive telegraph display, which allows a visitor to type a brief message on a keyboard while seeing it displayed and hearing it reproduced in Morse. This allows the visitor to hear American Morse Code reproduced on the sounder while comparing the speed at which the message was conveyed with their own intuitive understanding of the speed at which they can type or read an e-mail, text or similar message. Either of these displays can be customized for a particular theme. For example, a Civil War exhibit may display a message on a US Military Telegraph Corps form, or an exhibit at a railroad museum may display train orders on an appropriate "Form 19."

Much of the credit for these interactive displays goes to Les Kerr. Les is the creator of the "Morse KOB" program. With the help of Les, we have deployed both temporary and permanent exhibits at multiple locations, all of which have been received enthusiastically. Yet, nothing beats two operators demonstrating the transmission and reception of actual telegrams or other communications. Within the Morse Telegraph Club, we have a diminishing number of operators who can do this using American Morse. However, we do have numerous radio amateurs who are quite proficient with the Continental Code. It would certainly be nice if we could get some of our radio amateurs more involved in the demonstration of telegraphy at historical events, US Civil War Re-enactments, and similar events. While the use of American Morse would be ideal, the public generally can't differentiate between the two codes. The idea is to convey the concept and process of telegraphy.

One way to gain the necessary experience to participate in a telegraph demonstration using Continental Code is to participate in the ARRL National Traffic System (NTS). NTS CW nets allow one to learn the basic procedures for transmitting telegrams. The NTS message format is very similar to that used in commercial telegraphy. A few months of participation in CW traffic nets will prepare one nicely for demonstrating telegraphy. Of course, if one does use Continental Code in a telegraph demonstration, it is wise to keep true to our educational mission by explaining to visitors that commercial and railroad operators used American Morse Code.

With each passing year, we receive more and more requests for telegraph demonstrations. Those of us who can do so using the original Morse seem to be fewer and fewer with each year. It is my hope that our ham radio members will step forward and volunteer to help with such activities.

#### *A bit of confusion*

A bit of confusion has arisen around our annual dues process. An initial memorandum outlining the dues process for our Chapter Secretary/Treasurers had an error in it. A revised memo was quickly issued. However, the original version was accidentally redistributed to the Chapters on a later occasion, resulting in a genuine, confusing mess. Our Chapter Secretary/Treasurers are encouraged to contact the International President if they have any questions about the procedure for dues collection. We will work with you to accommodate any requirements arising from this error. In the meantime, we apologize for any inconvenience.

Contact information for the International officers and our business manager are published in each issue of Dots and Dashes. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Finally, our best wishes to all of our members for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Some exciting things are on the agenda for 2015, in which I am sure you will all want to take part. It is our hope you will continue to support MTC as we move into the future.

*Happy Holidays!*  
-30-

electromagnet. This was the first practical use of electricity. It is likely that folks on any other planet would also stumble onto the first practical use of electricity in the form of a simple telegraph.

Recall that when the telegraph was invented, Webster's dictionary defined electricity as "an interesting phenomena of no practical value." Since the invention of the telegraph, mind

boggling progress has been made using electricity for advanced communications, navigation, photography, astronomy, and advanced medical devices.

If we make first contact with people on a nearby planet, perhaps the first message that we send to them ought to be, "What Hath God Wrought!"

**CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS**  
 FORM 31 TRAIN ORDER NO. 231 Aug 8th 1926

TO Ex 3304 East AT Killebuck

TO

X \_\_\_\_\_ TIME \_\_\_\_\_

Eng 3245 Run Extra Menepayuk to Nakina Hold main track meet Extra 3304 East at Obekemi Hold main track meet Extra 3311 East at Lurt.

S.M.J.

Conductor and Engineer must each have a copy of this order.

REPEATED AT 1050 pm

CONDUCTOR	ENGINEER	TRAIN	MADE	TIME	OPERATOR
Smith		X 3304	Complete	12:00 am	Leslie

FORM 19 & FORM 31 from 1926

**CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS**  
 FORM 19 Train Order No. 246 Aug 3 1926

TO Operator AT Killebuck

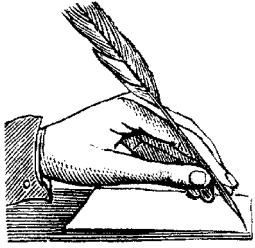
X \_\_\_\_\_ Opr: \_\_\_\_\_ M.

Order No Two Forty One 241 is Annulled

J.E.S.

Conductor and Engineer must each have a copy of this Order.

Made Complete time 257 p M. Leslie Opr.



# Letters to the Editor

## October 27th

Name here is Dick. I've only been a member for a year, so I am a bit behind. Lately, I have been watching the TV series "Murdock Mysteries" on Netflix. Last night we got up to Season 2, Episode 10, and I just received my issue of Dots & Dashes. I thought of you guys.

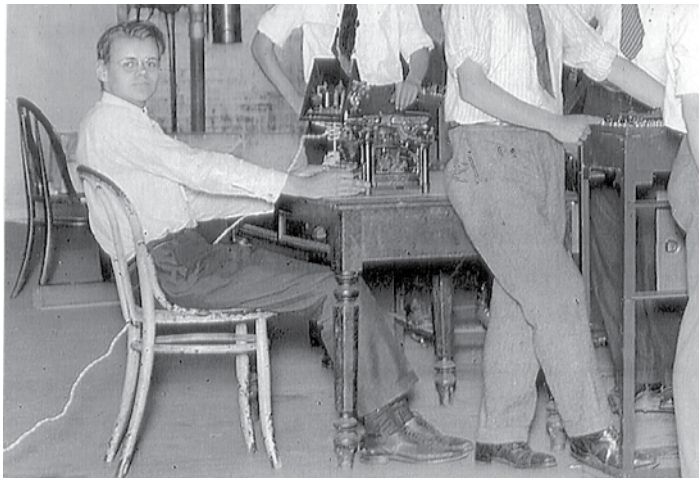
Wow, what a neat program this was (episode #10), featuring the telegraph. I am pretty sure you folks must have seen "Murdock Mysteries" on the original date that episode aired. One farfetched part was when they had the constable pose as the "dead guy" telegrapher. The "murderer lady", who was another telegrapher, did not recognize that "fist" was NOT the "dead guy." But none the less, it featured some neat equipment.

Regards,  
Dick, WB7OND

## October 31st

Those fall 2014 letters to the editor by Jim Wades, John Reiser, and John Babina bring back great memories to a former commercial and Western Union Morse telegrapher during the 1950-60 eras. WU ended Morse by 1970.

The answers supplied by Jim Wades [on page 10] were pretty accurate. In the large WU offices during the World Series, the wire chief would cut in a set on



*This is a close up of the Morse Telegrapher showing the circuit, the sounding resonator and the Underwood-5 Mill. This photo was taken prior to the start of the game.*

one of those telegraph positions so we could follow the major, then later on only minor league games. However, we were always too busy to catch each play-by-play.

At first, the circuit was not bidirectional in that you could not break the sending telegrapher at the ballpark. Later the circuit was modified. Yes, we used ABBNS (abbreviations) from the Phillips Code book with the baseball supplement therein. Some abbreviations that we used were not listed in that book, such as NTX for "nothing across," meaning no runs, no hits, no one left on base.

I have compiled a large file on baseball and on Morse Telegraphy. There are numerous photos of those magnetic or electrical baseball diamond boards and how they were operated in conjunction with telegraphy. Enclosed are a couple of pictures showing the telegrapher at a desk with a 120 Ohm ML sounder in an Acme pedestal resonator and his Underwood-5 mill. This particular board was used inside a motion picture theatre called the "Rodier Electric Baseball Game Producer."

That being said, telegrapher Del Klakken, who lives in Spokane, watches the Seattle Mariner games on his big screen TV set. Using dial-up Morse telegraphy, we make contact. Del transmits the action along with his commentaries. All through high school in Noxon, Montana, he played baseball and knows exactly what to do.

With the help on the ABBNS, he has it pretty well down. Making up my own cardboard baseball diamond board, complete with the ball, offence and defence players on the field, they are moved around after copying each play-by—plan on my all cap WU Underwood5 mil typewriter.

In another photo, you can see all of this going on at the Morse desk. A couple of neighbors who wanted to see this came over and one of them took the photo. When the game finished, we can "critique" what transpired. Anyone can watch a BB game on TV, but to handle it this way is unique. We get much more enjoyment than by just a viewing.

I once contacted every major metropolitan newspaper looking for one of those boards to do a historic

exhibition of a game. Only the Salt Lake City Tribune even bothered to reply! Numerous photos and plenty of information about their famous “Old Ironsides” were sent to me, but they said they no longer have the board.

Sadly, the 2014 World Series came to an end on October 29th. The team I was pulling for came up short by 3-2 in game 7.

*L.R. Keith  
KY Chapter*



*This photo was taken in 2012 when the Seattle Mariners vs. Baltimore Orioles game was being sent to me (L.R. Keith “KY”) by Del Klakken, over Dial-Morse. Everything you see, including the chair and the other green Western Union set, right hand corner, came from “Uncle Wes”.*

## November 2nd

My name is Erin Bristow and I am an 8th grader at Hesby Oaks Leadership Charter School in Los Angeles. My history class is doing a research project that has led me to you. We can investigate any topic under the theme of leadership and legacy. The project, National History Day, is a nationwide competition between grades 6 through 8 and 9 through 12. I am striving to be one of the top five projects in my class so that I can compete at local, state, and even national levels.

I am fascinated with methods of communication. It is unbelievable how fast communication has evolved. The form of communication that has most interested me is the one about which you are an expert – the telegraph. The telegraph seems to me to be the furthest jump in communications technology in history. Communication went from letters to instant messaging.

The topic that I chose to research was Abraham Lincoln’s leadership with the telegraph during the Civil War, and what legacy they left behind. While searching for an expert on the use of the telegraph in the Civil War, I read that you [The Morse Telegraph Club] were the telegraph consultant for the movie “Lincoln.”

As part of the project, we are required to have an interview with an expert on our topic. I would appreciate it so much if I could email you a few questions and have your answers over the email. If you agree, I can send you the interview questions in one or two weeks. Thank you!

*Sincerely,  
Erin Bristow*

*Readers: Erin sent me these questions and I responded on behalf of the Morse Telegraph Club. I’m glad that Erin and other young people are questioning the progress of communications, which so many other young people take for granted.  
~Editor Jim*

## November 4th

There was some use of teleprinters for baseball reporting. Attached are pictures of the Teletype Model 31 lightweight teleprinter, installed in a carrying case of Western Union design. Later, when Western Union was disposing of a lot of its older equipment, these machines were highly prized by the deaf people for use with modems for telephone communications. Now of course, there are made for the purpose little teleprinters hardly bigger than a telephone. But back then, surplus teleprinters were the only machines available for deaf communications.



The story is told of one deaf man who had his Model 31 stolen in San Francisco and later, no doubt at some risk to his safety, met with the thief and paid a ransom to get it back.

Western Union also had a business collecting and disseminating sports scores. In my home town circa 1950, the local WU office had one of the old glass bell jar tickers, long obsolete for the stock market. This was used for reporting baseball scores. The customer was a news stand where there were some tables in the back. A group of geezers, probably World War 1 pensioners, sat there all day playing dominoes.

During baseball season, a teenage boy was hired to read the ticker tape and post the information

on a chalk board. No doubt, the ole men were gambling on the games, but not on a large enough scale to attract the attention of the authorities.

*Jim Haynes  
W6JVE  
Fayetteville, Arkansas*

### **November 4th**

---

I transcribed the Jim Caldwell tape last night and extracted this story; it is 590 words long. Text of the story, "Quarantine and Quandary," is printed here along with two attached photographs.

Jim Caldwell handles with speed and precision the bug he purchased in 1918 for \$15 (That is \$236.45 in today's inflated money). Jim purchased the bug from an operator in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. When I interviewed Jim in 1990, he was a nonagenarian [a person in his 90's]. He often helped with demonstrations for the MTC Brotherly Love Chapter. He passed away in the 1990's.

He tells the story in his own words: During the First World War, I was on continuous duty and a flu epidemic had struck. If an operator got sick for any reason, they would put me on a train, a milk train or any train, to get me out there to the telegraph position. When the operator or interlocking plant got sick, they called and got me. I went up on an engine at Saint Mary, Pennsylvania; they slowed the engine down at the station and I hopped off the engine while it was still moving. They did not dare stop. In Saint Mary, PA, the trains did not stop at the station as the epidemic was so bad. All the stores were closed except the drug stores. The drug stores had the flu medication strewn on the counter; all you had to do was come in and pick it up. I guess the government must have paid for it; I don't know who paid for it. All the halls in Saint Mary were turned over for emergency use. When people got the flu they would put them in a fire hall or different halls. The whole town was quarantined.

Jim Caldwell tells another story as his 140 ohm model 3C Western Electric sounder clicks a musical rhythm. He recalls this form early in his career in Driftwood, Pennsylvania. "There was a train coming south and they were going to reverse the freight train in order to leave number 580 (the Philadelphia to Erie fast train) get around the freight train. The operator at HY tower put the signal out, in other words, if you had an order for a train you would put the red light out on the block signal and keep the block signal red until the engineer acknowledged your order signs. Then when he did that, you would turn the block green. The engineer would acknowledge the order signal by two blasts of the whistle.

On this one occasion the engineer did not answer the order signal. The conductor saw the red lantern signal so he put the air brakes on. The engineer called up at the telephone east of the siding and he said, "What's the matter; what have you got for me?" I called him by name. I said, "Butler, you know you ran an order signal." Butler responds, "Oh did I?" I said "yes." Butler said, "Don't report it; don't report it." I replied, "I want to tell you something. You have been awful mean to the operators. I work extra; I am the emergency man. They call me maybe two in the morning to go to a tower to relieve a man who was ill or sick. If I had to ride on an engine with you to go or come to a job, and you would start to curse and me the dickens. So ya' know, I think we better report this. But, I said, "If you change your mind (attitude), we won't report it and we will cover for you," which he did. Butler was a different person from then on!

*Michael C. Migliaccio  
N3Y/LM*

### **November 4th**

---

Hey, look what I found amongst my memorabilia! This photo was from back in the days when Vern Robicheau and I set up the meeting room at Brantford on the Canadian Hub.

This is the writers dual arm resonator and sounder; also my bug. The bug is Canadian, made by F. A. Wilcox, a Commercial Canadian national Telegraph Operator in the Toronto "TN" Office.

Fred Wilcox was also an excellent machinist. This "bug" was electro-plated nickel silver twin blue paddles. Every piece on the bug was embossed "F.A. Wilcox," even the wedge! Fred's name was on the bottom of the base along with the date: 1948.

In 2009 I sold this bug for \$500 to a collector from North Tonawanda, New York. The collector drove all the way from North Tonawanda to get it. Don Laycock, Secretary-Treasurer of the maple leaf Chapter, was present and was a witness to the sale.

*Gren Schrader*

### **November 10th**

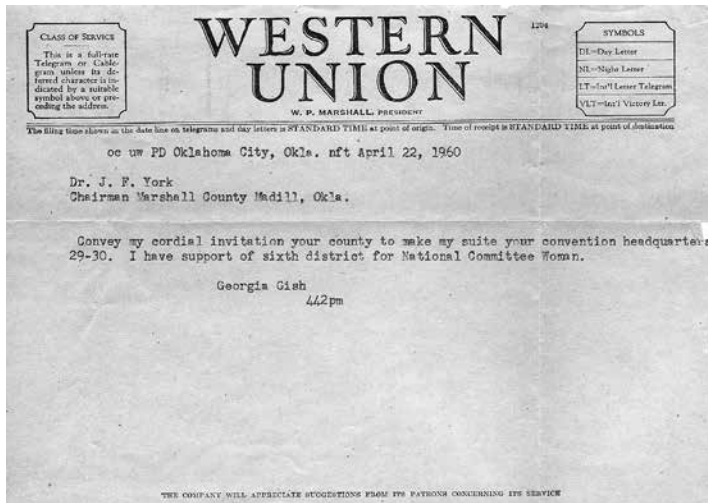
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This telegram was copied by me in 1960 and was probably one of the last ones sent by Morse, as WU was about our of Morse operators by then. Not long afterwards, they transmitted their stuff by gummed tape, which was a mess.

My son found this in a local antique store a few years ago and he bought it for me. If you use it, I'd like to have it back to put in my Morse scrapbook.



73,  
Gene Wood



PS: You've asked for some stuff that was in previous issues of Dots & Dashes, so here is a poem that was in D&D several years ago.

#### Eugene's Poem: The Test

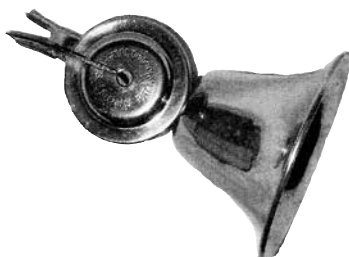
The DS a-callin' woke me up like a shot.  
When I fell off the table it hurt me a lot.  
He kept on a-callin' but his Morse was real bad  
So I waited to answer until he got good and mad.  
Finally, I answered. He asked "Where have you been?"  
I said "selling a ticket and billing a hen."  
He said, "You're a liar, but copy three west!"  
So I put out my board and hoped for the best.  
He called every station that still had a board  
He even called some that were dead as a gourd.  
He started the order but his bug was too light  
So we guessed at some words and hoped we were right.  
Finally he finished and we all hoped for a rest  
But he said "Pull in your board, boys, it was only a test."  
"Only a test!" why you crazy old coot  
You interrupted my sleep and a good dream to boot.  
So I laid down again with my head on the Guide  
And went back to sleep with a clear board outside

#### November 10th

Could you tell me anything about this picture?  
I have the actual piece in my China Cabinet.  
My husband passed away two months ago on  
September 25, 2014.  
His name was Larry  
Wigfield.

Thank you,  
Bonnie Wigfield  
Nya, Minnesota

PS: I enjoy your  
magazine!



#### November 20th

My friend Katie Drabot and I are students at Cedarburg High School in Cedarburg, Wisconsin. For our U.S. History class we are doing the National History Day project. We decided to pick Samuel Morse and his invention of the telegraph as our topic. We were wondering if you could please take some time to answer a few of our questions.

1. How did Samuel Morse's invention of the telegraph transform commerce and the course of the modern world?
2. What were some of the challenges Morse had to overcome when trying to invent the telegraph?
3. How was Morse able to overcome these challenges?
4. What were some of Samuel Morse's leadership qualities?
5. How was Morse able to lead those around him to aid him in developing the telegraph?
6. Why is Morse considered one of the founders of modern communication?
7. What was the lasting impact of Morse's invention has had on society?
8. Why was the telegraph so significant to American history?
9. How did Morse's family environment growing up shape him into the person he became?
10. How did Morse show leadership in the face of difficulty?
11. How was Samuel Morse able to convince people to support his new invention and believe that it was important?

Thank you so much in advance for taking time to answer these questions. If you have any other information about Samuel Morse and his invention, please let us know.

Sincerely,  
Allie Barber & Katie Drabot


Readers: You will be pleased to read these questions by high school students Allie and Katie. These questions show their curiosity and appreciation of the telegraph. I responded in detail. How would you answer these questions? ~Editor Jim

## December 1st

This is form 6111, a telegraph blank, order 49241 dated December 5, 1932 was published in the Canadian Gazette. This telegram form predates the dual English-French inscriptions.

*~Thanks to J. Guy Hamel of La Prairie, Quebec for these 1932 good wishes.*

<b>CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED</b> Full Rate Message Day Letter Night Message Night Letter Papers (check mark as it appears on the class of service desired OTHERWISE THE MESSAGE WILL BE TRANSMITTED AS A TELETYPE TELEGRAM)	<b>CANADIAN NATIONAL TELEGRAPHS</b> D. E. GALLOWAY, ASSISTANT MANAGER, TORONTO, ONT.	Exclusive Connection with WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH CO. Cable Service to all the World Money Transferred by Telegraph
RECEIVED NO.	TIME FILED	CHARGE
Send the following message, subject to the terms as back hereof, which are hereby agreed to		
To	THE SLOW SPEED WIRE GROUP CANADA	
	"OR" OAKVILLE, ON - 1 <sup>ST</sup> DEC 2014 19.	
MAY YOUR CHRISTMAS BE A MERRY ONE AND THE NEW YEAR FULL OF HAPPINESS		
G S @ OR		
SENDER'S NAME AND ADDRESS (FOR REFERENCE ONLY)		
SENDER'S TELEPHONE NUMBER		



## December 12th

Dear Friends and Members of the MTC,

It's been another year of ups and downs but as always, the calls, e-mails and little notes you send me always put a smile on my face. Your encouragement and appreciation is so sweet and I thank you so very much! A quick cute story - my dad had a massive stroke last October. He couldn't speak the first few days and he kept taking my brother or my hand and tapping on it. We finally figured out he was trying to send Morse to us! An old telegrapher never quits! Thankfully, now he is almost 100% with just a little speech impediment, but he continues to improve. So - my house is decorated for Christmas. My dad is busy baking for family and friends (the smell alone is fattening!), Jerry is chasing cows and mending fence and I'm just waiting for ONE BIG SNOW! (I bet I hear from some of you on that one!)

I want to apologize for any problems you've experienced

during our transition from old to new! In theory we had hoped to have all the information, documents and procedures taken care of earlier this year. In reality, we are still working on the last stages of things. The good news is we have a new updated and current roster (the old one was 23+ years old and caused lots of problems!), a new computer system with all the old templates, documents and such converted, current and everything is compatible to current systems so I can join in this new age of technology. All I have to do is learn it now! :) I am so grateful and thank you all for your patience and help. If you have any problems, suggestions, comments or requests, please contact me either by email, [imsohappy@juno.com](mailto:imsohappy@juno.com) or phone, (540) 423-1014. If you want a 2015 Membership Certificate or have missed issues of Dots and Dashes the past year, please let me know.

*Thank you again and I pray you all have a wonderful, MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!*

*Best Wishes!*

*Cindy*

*International Secretary-Treasurer*

### NEW CONTACT FOR CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please notify Ms. Gaye Hobson of any changes in your address. She can be reached by e-mail at [gaye@mandecllc.com](mailto:gaye@mandecllc.com) or by phone at (734) 740-4886.

## December 18th

I am a member of Morse Telegraph Club since about 2002. I am also a lifetime member of the ESRM, Empire State Railway Museum, in Phoenicia, New York in the Catskill Mountains (Ulster County) PO Box 455, Phoenicia, N.Y. 12464. 845-688-7501. The issue is that I am getting a lot of journals ready for their museum, but I am reluctant to give my collection of *Dots & Dashes* from 2002 to current. Do you know anybody who could donate their collection from about the past ten years to this museum which is interested in obtaining them? As this has time value, if you could kindly make a quick search for anybody who can oblige, it would get me off of the hook as I value my collection which is rich in stories and history and technical information. I will be having someone from the museum picking up my other items here on Long Island after Christmas. I would be glad to help with the shipping cost of such a collection of *Dots & Dashes* to the museum directly if you could locate such.

*Thank you for your kind attention to my request.*

*Very Sincerely,*

*Ronald Young*

*WB2JJX*

*Garden City, N.Y.*

# HOLIDAY ON STEEL

*This story is reprinted from Fort McMurray Today by writer Alexandra Collins  
submitted to Dots & Dashes by MTC member Peter Rosychuk.*

**O**n an old train inspection cart, 90 year old Peter Rosychuk made his way back to his home after more than 70 years. Roschuk visited Fort McMurray as part of the North American Railcar Operators Association (NAERCOA) excursion on the Athabasca Northern Railway.

In 1947, Peter worked for the Northern Alberta Railway as a telegrapher and lived in Waterways. "Coming back to Fort McMurray was something of interest to me," Rosychuk said, adding, "I have memories here from 1947." Peter and his wife Margie visited the city about 20 years ago and Rosychuk said it was amazing to see the region by rail again, and to see how much it has grown over the years.

Young and old alike take part in the unique hobby. Rosychuk was the oldest participant and the Wiens family had the youngest as their three young children accompanied them on the ride. "Youth are welcome on these trips as long as they are over the age of five," said trip organizer Mike Ford of Indiana.

A family of five from Sunder, Alta. picked up the hobby about three years earlier. This was their fourth adventure, commented Barbara Wiens. A thirst for the rails has always been evident with this family, starting with miniature train tracks in their garden then going full scale after watching a popular CBC television show. The Wiens chose to sign up for this junket because it was conveniently close to home for them. Other railcar enthusiasts chose to travel around the continent to carve notches in their railcar travel belt.

Bill Evans of Palmdale, California estimated that he had participated in about 1,000 railroad excursions over the years that he has been involved with the group. These excursions have taken him across Canada and the United States and into Mexico. His next planned trip is to Saskatchewan, he revealed. Evans purchased his first railcar in 1975; he owned the current one he was driving for about 22 years. "It gives me the opportunity to see a lot of places you don't see from

the highway," said Evens. Something that always tickles the Evans funny bone on these trips is seeing people's backyards. He added, "When you drive on the highways, you see people's front yards done up all nice, but he backyards are always something different." Evens elaborated, "There's some interesting stuff back there."

Hundreds of railcar treks are planned for NARCOA's 1,500 members every year from about April through October. The organization has about 20 members who are designated to plan the trips. Depending on where these trips take place, the cost is typically about \$100 U.S. per day and the cost often includes the price of accommodations as well. Insurance is available through this organization and is necessary to participate in excursions.

The railcars are usually one cylinder engines that run on either diesel or gasoline fuel. The cars travel an average of about 30 kilometers per hour but can go as fast as 75 km/h. Readers can learn more about this fascinating hobby on the web site [www.narcoa.org](http://www.narcoa.org).

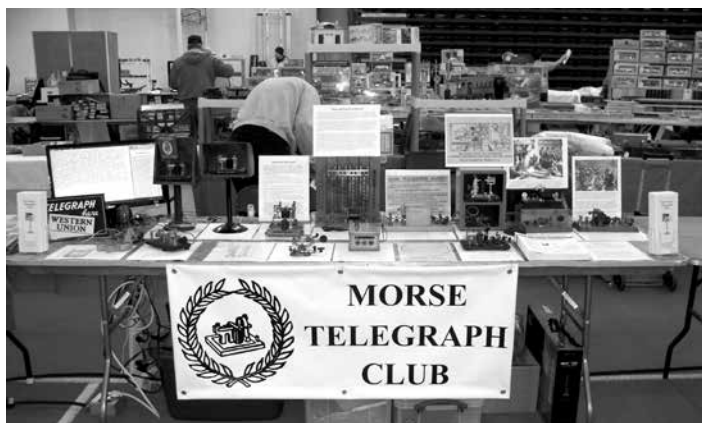


# CHAPTER NEWS

## Members at Large “GC” Chapter

I had a successful exhibit with a lot of interest at this years annual “Tiger Tracks” train show, sponsored by the Rochester Institute of Technology Model Railroad Club. I’ve included a photo of my display, my typical “telegraph road show”. Several folks said that they were considering joining the MTC.

73,  
*Chris Hausler*



## Maple Leaf “ON” Chapter

Tom Hamblin, Maple Leaf Chapter President, organized a demonstration at Black Creek Pioneer Village in Toronto Ontario, for the evening of December 13/2014.

It was part of their “Christmas by lamplight” event and many visitors were amazed by the art of telegraphy.

Shown in the photo left to right are Doug Hately, John Shoemaker, Tom Hamblin and Don Laycock our Secretary-Treasurer. Seated is Mary Shoemaker. Rose Hately took the photo.

*Doug Hately*



# FAMOUS BIOGRAPHER OF SAMUEL MORSE DIES

**C**ARLETON MABEE, age 99, died on December 18, 2014. He would have turned age 100 on Christmas Day. Carlton won a Pulitzer Prize for his biography of Samuel F. B. Morse.

The son of Baptist missionary teachers, Mr. Mabee spent nine years of his childhood living in China then later lived in Lewistown, Maine. His writing career focused on American social history. During World War II as a Contentious Objector, Carlton served his country performing public service work. During the civil rights movement of the 1960’s, Mabee participated in sit-ins and voter registration drives in the south. He was very idealistic.

His daughter, Susan Mabee Newhouse, states that what was important to her father was “his ability to do research, to write and pursue social justice causes.” Pulitzer Prize winning historian Allan Nevins encouraged Carlton’s interest in Samuel Morse. The result was the 1943 publication, “The American Leonardo,” about Samuel Morse. This biography praised Morse for his inventiveness but criticized Morse for his pro-slavery politics, his anti-Catholic rage, and his anti-immigrant stance. “He was also apparently a horrible husband and father,” according to this biography. “It is a very human Morse that emerges from Mr. Mabee’s pages,” states Adam Bernstein, reporter for the Washington Post.

*The information source for this summary article was: The Washington Post obituaries of December 23, 2014. You may read far more details in this Post obituary. ~Jim*

# BUYING A WATCH IN 1880: HISTORY YOU PROBABLY DIDN'T KNOW!

By Wayne Stevenson

If you were in the market for a watch in 1880, would you know where to get one? You would go to a store, right? Well, of course you could do that, but if you wanted one that was cheaper and a bit better than most of the store watches, you went to the train station! Sound a bit funny? Well, for about 500 towns across the northern United States, that's where the best watches were found. Why were the best watches found at the train station? The railroad company wasn't selling the watches, not at all. The telegraph operator was. Most of the time the telegraph operator was located in the railroad station because the telegraph lines followed the railroad tracks from town to town. It was usually the shortest distance and the right-of-ways had already been secured for the rail line. Most of the station agents were also skilled telegraph operators and that was the primary way that they communicated with the railroad. They would know when trains left the previous station and when they were due at their next station. And it was the telegraph operator who had the watches. As a matter of fact, they sold more of them than almost all the stores combined for a period of about 9 years. This was all arranged by "Richard", who was a telegraph operator himself. He was on duty in the North Redwood, Minnesota train station one day when a load of

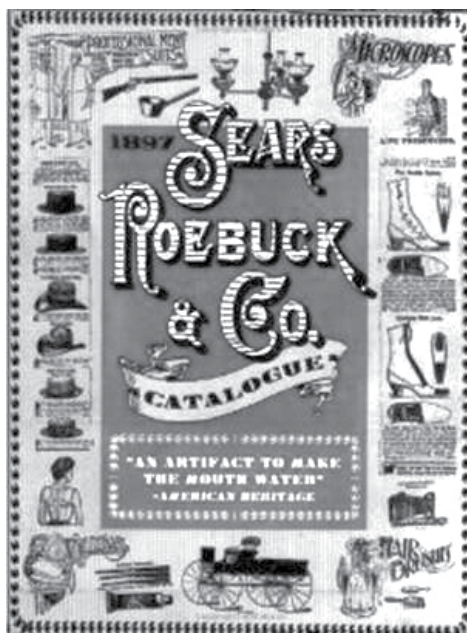


watches arrived from the East. It was a huge crate of pocket watches. No one ever came to claim them.

So Richard sent a telegram to the manufacturer and asked them what they wanted to do with the watches. The manufacturer didn't want to pay the freight back, so they wired Richard to see if he could sell them. So Richard did. He sent a wire to every agent in the system asking them if they wanted a cheap, but good, pocket watch. He sold the entire case in less than two days and at a handsome profit. That started it all. He ordered more watches from the watch company and encouraged the telegraph operators to set up a display case in the station offering high quality watches for a cheap price to all the travelers. It worked! It didn't take long for the word to spread and, before long, people other than travelers came to the train station to buy watches. Richard became so busy that he had to hire a professional watch maker to help him with the orders. That was Alvah.

And the rest is history as they say. The business took off and soon expanded to many other lines of dry goods. Richard and Alvah left the train station and moved their company to Chicago -- and it's still there.

*Yes, it's a little known fact,* that for a while in the 1880's, the biggest watch retailer in the country was at the train station. It all started with a telegraph operator, Richard Sears and, his partner, Alvah Roebuck!



# “30” SILENT KEYS

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



## CD Combs Memorial “FN” Chapter

**SAMUEL WALLACE**, age 83, of North Platte, Nebraska passed away at home surrounded by his family on November 3, 2014. He was born on April 20, 1931. Sam graduated from Clarks High school in 1949 then went to work for the Union Pacific Railroad as a telegrapher.

On June 10, 1951, Sam married Louise Garretson at Clarks, North Carolina. Louise and Sam raised four sons while living in Clarks, NC and in Salina, Kansas. In 1952, Sam joined the U.S. Marines and served until 1954. Following his discharge, Sam returned to Clarks and resumed his job with the railroad.

Sam and his family moved to North Platte in 1967, where Sam continued his employment with the Union Pacific. Soon, he received a promotion to Chief Train Dispatcher. During his career, Sam worked as a telegrapher, station agent, and Chief Train Dispatcher. He retired in 1987.

In addition to the Morse Telegraph Club, Sam was a member of the First United Methodist Church, the Platte Valley Lodge and American Legion. He also assisted with Marriage Encounter and with Meals-on Wheels. In 1999, Sam and Louise received the “Mainlanders of the Year Volunteer Award.”

Sam and Louise were married for 63 years. Sam is survived by his wife Louise and their four sons and by ten grand children and nine great grandchildren. Sam was buried in the Fort McPherson National Cemetery.

*Thanks to Richard Behrens for this interesting information.*

## Twin City “MS” Chapter

**HAROLD R. STRATMOEN** of Woodbury, Minnesota passed away on October 31, 2014. Harold worked for the former Great Northern Railroad. Thanks to Charles F. Roark, Secretary-Treasurer of the MS Chapter, for this brief notice.

**LARRY N. WIGFIELD** of Carver, Minnesota passed away on September 28, 2014. Larry’s brother, Verne, was also a train dispatcher.

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

## Vancouver “DI” Chapter

**CORKY WATSON**, age 75, of Surrey, British Columbia passed away on October 23, 2014 from an aneurysm. Corky worked as an agent/operator on the Northern Alberta Railway from 1945-1965. In 1965, he resigned from the railway to attend Notre Dame University. After graduation, he taught school for the next 20 years. Following retirement, Corky and MTC member Al Renflesh did a number of Morse demonstrations at several schools. Corky is survived by his wife, Peggy, and their five children.

*Thanks to Lavina Shaw for this interesting information.*

## Montreal/Ottawa “GO” Chapter

**GUY ST. LAURENT**, age 86, of Ottawa, Canada died on October 20, 2014. Guy worked as an operator for the Canadian National Railway from 1947 to 1985. He worked on the Quebec District, Montreal and Ottawa area, Edmonton, and Jasper Alta.

Guy enjoyed participating in telegraph demonstrations at various locations and he attended telegraph banquets as long as he was able to do so.

*Thanks to Roly Lauriault for this information.*

## Emory Mulquin “PD” Chapter

**DONALD WESLEY MATTHEWS**, age 88 of Olympia, Washington passed away on October 13, 2014. He was born in Libby, Montana on January 25, 1926. Don was the second oldest of eight children. His parents, Howard and Mabel Matthews, later moved the family to Colville, Washington, where Don stayed unit joining the U.S. Navy at the age of 17.

While in the Navy, Don was stationed at Twenty-nine Palms, California, where he performed gun synchronization through airplane propeller blades. ➡

After his discharge from the Navy, Don learned telegraphy and began working as a telegrapher for the Northern Pacific Railroad in Lind, Washington. From there he went to Thompson Falls, Montana. It was there that Don met his future wife, Joanne Brockway. Jo worked as a "soda jerk" at her parents business: Brock's Fountain, Variety and Florist.

From his window at the railroad depot, Don admitted to watching Jo walk up the hill to school every morning during her senior year in high school Brock's fountain soon became his favorite after work hangout. Don proposed to Jo on the way home from picking her up from college from summer break "under the biggest moon they had ever seen." Don and Jo were married on December 22, 1949 at St. John's Cathedral in Spokane, Washington.

Don's job as a telegrapher took them from Thompson Falls to Noxon, Montana, Trout Creek, Montana, Marshall, Washington, Cheney, Washington, and finally to Spokane, Washington where he began working as a dispatcher for the next 17 years.

In 1973, Don was transferred to Vancouver, Washington. In 1983, the railroad moved all dispatchers to Seattle. During that time, Don and Jo lived on Bainbridge Island. Don retired from the Burlington Northern in 1988. Don and Jo then spent the next five years traveling through the United States and Mexico in their motor home.

Don enjoyed camping, hunting, and fishing. He and Jo often said the best thing about moving to

western Washington was being close to the ocean beaches. They always caught their legal limits during razor clamming season. Every summer they would borrow their three grandchildren for at least a couple of weeks and head out for an adventure in their motor home. Then over the years, they loved remembering and repeating stories about those trips.

Don and Jo were members of the First Church of God in Vancouver and they served for several years as greeters. They also had the opportunity to travel to Israel and parts of Europe on a trip with their pastor and a group of church members.

Don is survived by his wife Jo, son Steve (Patty), grandchildren Tara Roybal (Esteban), John (Tamara), and Bryce (Fonda), and brothers Ted (Dorothy) and Ed (Peggy), as well as many nieces and nephews.

*Thanks to Steve Matthews, Don's son, for this detailed information about his father.*

#### Thomas Edison "TH" Chapter

**ROBERT W. McQUOWN**, age 86, of Bismarck, Illinois passed away suddenly on February 20, 2014. He was born on August 11, 1927. Bob worked for 38 years as a telegraph operator for the C&I Railroad. "He was a great man; everybody liked him," comments Bob's wife Jeanne.

*Thanks to Jeanne McQuown, Bob's wife, for this brief notice.*

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# DEFINING THE MORSE TELEGRAPH CLUB

**T**he Morse Telegraph Club is an international non-profit organization dedicated to the perpetuation of and knowledge and traditions of telegraphy. Our membership includes not only those from the craft of telegraphy, using Morse Code (American or International) either wire or wireless, but also includes those who are actively involved in the goals and initiatives of our organization. These goals are, but not limited to, preserving the heritage of telegraphy

and education the public on the history of Morse telegraph communications.

Although membership in the Morse Telegraph Club requires the payment of annual dues, participation in our forums is open to everyone. Participation in our online club forum requires you to be registered and we validate that you are indeed a human! Send your forum registration to [forum@morsetelegraphclub.org](mailto:forum@morsetelegraphclub.org). Please include a brief note about yourself.

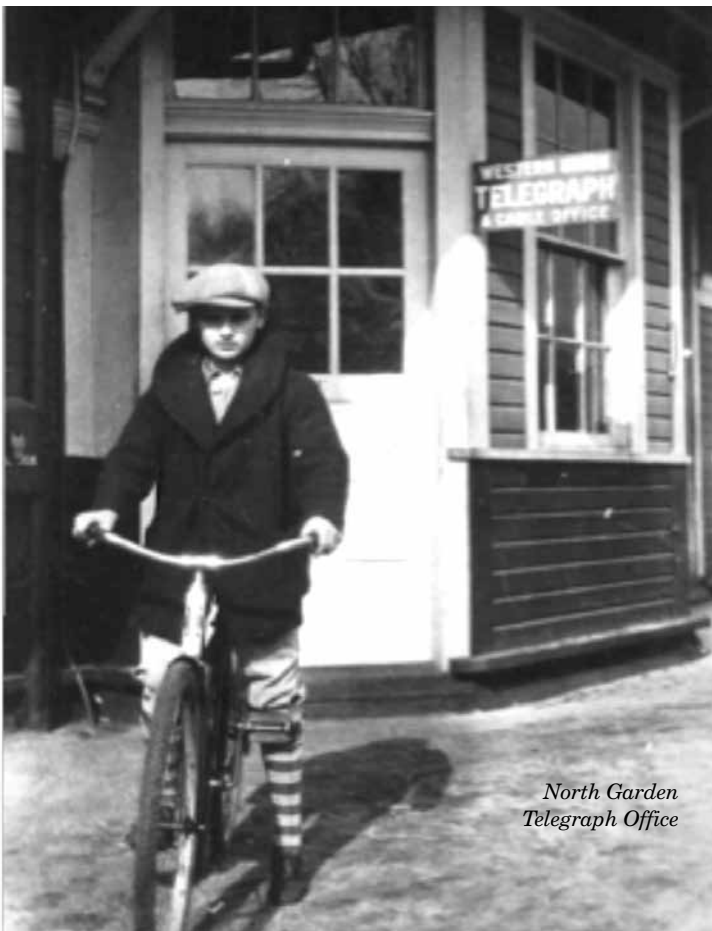
# THEODORE ROOSEVELT'S SECRET SERVICE

*Written for Dots & Dashes by William F. Marley, Jr., Friend of MTC*

Boy, have things changed from the early 1900's with respect to the Secret Service accompanying the President on his travels. The Roosevelts bought a "retreat" about seventeen miles south of Charlottesville, Virginia in the early 1900s as the President began to plan for his leaving the White House. The retreat was named "Pine Knot" and consisted of about 15 wooded acres; additional acres were acquired at a later date. When they left Washington their entourage generally consisted of two Secret Service agents, a stenographer, the White House physician, and on special occasions, two White House cooks. They usually traveled in a drawing room or private train car, usually attached to the fast Washington and Florida Limited. The two Secret Service, James Sloan and Frank Tyree regularly accompanied them on their visits; Sloan often stayed at Plain Dealing, a nearby home. He is reported to check

on the Roosevelts periodically throughout the night. Tyree usually stayed at North Garden, which had a telegraph station whereby he could be in connect with the White House if needed. In 1907 there were reports that the Presidents' life might be in danger. Consequently, security was increased. On subsequent visits two Secret Service agents guarded Pine Knot in the evenings, while others patrolled around the area during the day. The following picture (early 1920s) shows a local resident, Steele Houchens, on her bike outside the telegraph office at the North Garden train station.

Percy Hudson was the station agent and telegraph operator at North Garden for about 50 years. Percy began his employment with the railroad on Sept 25, 1906; he retired in 1960. Mr Hudson actually served as a helper prior to his official employment in 1906. During this time Percy learned to operate the Morse code telegraph instrument.



*North Garden  
Telegraph Office*



*Percy Hudson, Telegrapher, North Garden Railroad Station*



# THE FIRST FEMALE SHIP WIRELESS OPERATOR

*Written for Dots & Dashes by MTC member Pat Kelly*

Since the invention of wireless telegraphy, the position of wireless operators on board ship was for many years exclusively male. Later, several young women entered the field with varying success. Among them was a Miss Graynella Packer. She was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania about 1888. As a young girl she became attracted to the field of telegraphy and practised her Morse code diligently. Later she was employed as a telegrapher in charge of the Post Telegraph Office in Sanford, Florida. She arrived in New York in 1910 and applied for a position as wireless operator on board ship. Officials, and even the public were somewhat sceptical about putting a female in charge of a vessel's radio room, but a coast-wise shipping company, thought it might have some publicity value and hired her. There was, as yet, no government license required, so after a short training period on station "NY" in New York, Miss Packer, aged twenty two, was assigned as radio officer on board the company's ship, SS/ Mohawk, thus becoming, as far as I can ascertain, the first sea going female marine wireless operator. The date was November 29th, 1910.

The Mohawk was a steamer owned by the U.S. Telegraph Co. , and was a typical coast-wise vessel of that time. Miss Packer served from November 1910 until April, 1911. She made several trips and was praised for her good work. After a few months Miss Packer left the sea and in 1922 was admitted to the Oklahoma Bar Association and an Attorney.



*This is not Graynella Packer but it is Angela Fieman, who would appear in a similar situation aboard ship.*

## DO YOU KNOW?

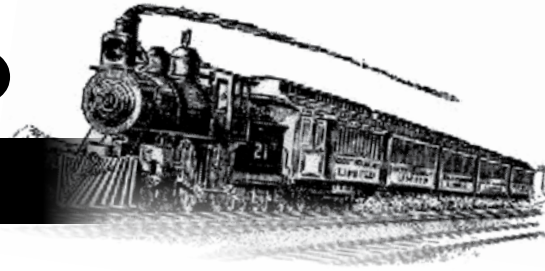
*Do you know how many planets exist?*

Until recently, we defined nine planets in our small solar system. These included Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. But in August 2006, the planet Pluto was downgraded from a planet to a Keiper Object.

Our Milky Way Galaxy contains millions of solar systems. The Universe also contains billions of galaxies. Thus within the universe, trillions of planets exist, but only a small percentage of these include civilized life forms. The estimation is that less than one million other planets include "civilized people" like us. For a current count of other planets, Google: [planetquest.jpl.nasa.gov](http://planetquest.jpl.nasa.gov).

# WELCOME ABOARD

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



### **Vancouver "DF" Chapter**

**WILLIAM W. HEATH** of Coquitlam, British Columbia was born on October 29, 1926. He worked as a Wireless operator with the Marine Branch of the Department of Transportation at three different stations plus six months on a patrol ship. Then he worked for DOT Air Services at Winnipeg and Sioux Lookout, Ontario. Next Bill headed back to British Columbia in 1947 with the Government Telegraph & Telephone services. Then it was with the Wireless at Finlay Forks and Alice Arm and wireless and landline at Hazelton. From 1949-1955

Bill worked as a GT&TS agent at Smithers until the system shut down. From 1954-55 at the CN Telegraphs, he kept the up town office open for a year, so he had "homestead" rights. Then until the end of school in 1956, Bill had other full time work. Next he moved to Vancouver with his family. After six months with the CP telegraphs he was layed off and never returned to work.

*Welcome to the Morse Telegraph Club, Bill. You are our only new member for this quarter!*



# REPORT CARD ON YOUR STUDENT

*By Warren McFarland of the Florida MTC Chapter*

**D**uring WWII, one of the agents was running a mini telegraph school in his agency for local kids. He told his students that he didn't have time to teach them to use a hand key so he started them off with a semi automatic "bug." I had gone in the Navy before most of these kids started telegraph school. Then I worked several of them after I returned from the Navy. None of them were very good operators. One of these kids is now a member of the Florida chapter; to this day he cannot send with a hand key.

The ACL hired three or four brokerage operators from our division during the war on a temporary basis. These temporary ops left as the more experienced operators returned from war. Merrill Lynch opened an office in Ocala, Florida after the war. After the office got started, I went over there one day to see the two former students and to see what a brokerage office was all about. Merrill Lynch had a leased wire from New York to Havana; actually they had at least two wires: one for stock prices and the other for buy/sell orders and stuff like that.

The operator in New York would call an office twice, and then start sending the message traffic, without waiting for the office to acknowledge that anyone was in position to copy. He would call "KA KANY" and then start sending. When he finished the message, he would close his key and wait for the operator at Merrill Lynch to sine. If they didn't sine right away, he would say, "Sine" and wait another second or two then say "Sine dam u sine."

I could read the traffic but I would have been hard pressed to put it down on paper. The guys who were working at Merrill Lynch could not only copy it, but they could copy a whole message behind. By that time I could copy behind on railroad traffic, but I know I could not have done it

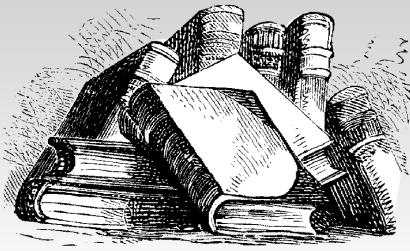
on that brokerage traffic.

When I went into the Navy, I was just a run-of-the-mill operator, copying about 20-25 words per minute. I worked various train order jobs, relieving agents when they had to be off. But when I went to radio school, I found that my American Morse experience gave me a big jump on everybody else. Within a few weeks, I was able to copy International code at about 20-25 wpm.

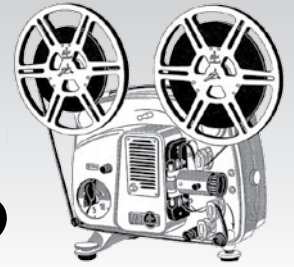
Then when I came back to the railroad, my International code experience had improved my American code speed. That first winter after I came back, they put on a seasonal job at St. Petersburg; the Chief asked me to go there for the winter. It was a heavy telegraph job because St. Pete controlled most of the space on six different passenger trains out of there. All requests and confirmations were handled by telegraph.

One of the guys in that in that office, Bill Roberts, had been a bonus wire op for Western Union. But he had come to the railroad long before the war (perhaps he had not left Western Union voluntarily). Just about the first thing he said to me when I walked in to go to work was, "You may not be much of an operator now, but you will be by the time you leave here. Sit down there and get to work." He was right. They forced me to handle the biggest part of that traffic and by the time I left there, about four months later, I felt that I could handle any telegraph job that we had.

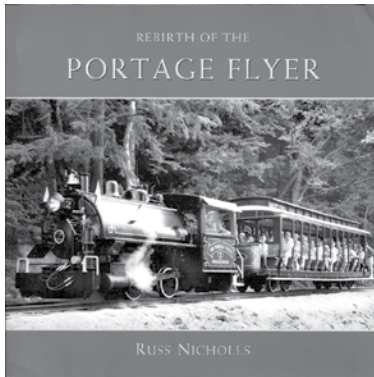
Within about two weeks after leaving there, I was in the Superintendent's office, working a trick in the relay office. And after a few months there, they asked me to start sitting in to learn train dispatching. Then I did that for about three months, sitting in on 3rd trick after working the 2nd trick in the relay office. Fortunately I wasn't yet married, so I just had to worry about me.



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



**F**or this issue of *Dots & Dashes* I'm starting with a review of a book by MTC member Russ Nicholls titled, *Rebirth of the Portage Flyer*. Constructed early in the 20th Century, this one and one eighth mile railway and its diminutive Porter



steam engines hauled passengers and freight between North Portage on Peninsula Lake and South Portage on Lake of Bays in the District of Muskoka near Huntsville Ontario Canada. As the original arteries of commerce and travel in general were waterways, they didn't always connect and it was necessary to manually portage, that is transport people and materials overland, between the waterways. This eventually led to the development of portage railways, usually small and short, to ease and speed this transport. However, better roads eventually led to the disappearance of both the portage railways and the steamboats which plied the adjacent waterways. The Huntsville and Lake of Bays Railway was finally abandoned in 1959 and the equipment sold off.

Mr. Nicholls' book documents this history. Although gone, the little railway was not forgotten by the townsfolk. The book goes on to describe how starting in 1984, the citizens, businesses and other organizations in the Huntsville area banded together to preserve this history and restore the little steam train to operation, although not in its original location. It provides a detailed look at the effort which took sixteen years. The grand opening of the restored railway was in 2000 as part of Muskoka Heritage Place. It's construction was accomplished despite many setbacks, one of which almost ended the effort when their originally selected route, onto which they had put an

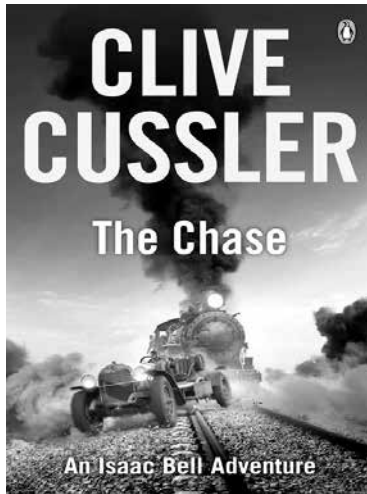
extensive amount of work, was deemed unsuitable due to insufficient traffic flow. The story presented in the book is essentially an heroic one of how obstacles were overcome, progress, if sometimes slow, was made and eventual success was achieved. Mr. Nicholls writes from first hand experience as he was in it from the start and was president of the Huntsville and Lake of Bays Railway Society for most of those early years.

Where's the telegraphy you ask. Well, Mr. Nicholls worked for the New York Central Railway on the Canada Division as a telegraph operator from 1949 to 1962. When the restored railway was opened, Mr. Nicholls agreed to staff the telegraph offices on the line with retired railway telegraphers. In all, eighteen actually came to his aid. The story of the establishment of the telegraph offices, the acquisition of the necessary equipment and wire, is also told in the book. Unfortunately, since the book was published in 2005, the telegraph demonstrations have ended but the station still has an authentic telegraph office set up on display.

Details of how to order the book can be found on Russ' web site for the book: [www.steamtrainhuntsville.com](http://www.steamtrainhuntsville.com). If you don't have access to the internet, and want to mail in a check instead, send it to: Walker Lake Productions, 127 Brunel Road, Huntsville, ON P1H 1R2. The cost of the book is \$19.95 (CDN\$ or US\$) plus postage, which is \$7 first class. Canadian purchasers must also add 8% H.S.T The web site has details on other, lower cost, shipping options. I think you will enjoy reading this book.

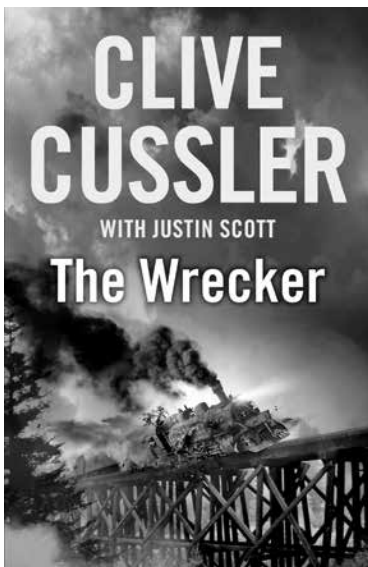
**M**y second selection for this issue is actually two books, the first two novels in a series by well known author Clive Cussler. Known for many books including his *Dirk Pitt* series, this newer series features fictional private detective Issac Bell of the Van Dorn Detective Agency. Bell is described as a tall, lean, no-nonsense detective with a sense of justice. Early last October I was riding Amtrak's

Crescent from New Orleans to New York City and while chatting with one of the Amtrak conductors about telegraphy and railroads in general he suggested I might enjoy these books. The first book is, *The Chase* published in 2007 and the second, co-authored with Justin Scott, is, *The Wrecker* published in 2009.



The story in the first book, *The Chase*, is about a bank robber nicknamed the “Butcher Bandit” as he murders all persons, including women and children who observe his robberies. As his crimes spread and he seems to disappear into thin air after each of his ill deeds, in desperation authorities contact the Van Dorn Agency. Naturally they send out their best detective, who has a reputation of always getting his man (what else would you expect), Issac Bell. The story then proceeds to describe the events as Bell and his associates from Van Dorn search through the evidence and eventually uncover the culprit.

The story in the second book, *The Wrecker*, describes the building of a new “Cascades” rail line for the Southern Pacific Railroad, the construction of which seems to be suffering from an overabundance of train wrecks, unexpected explosions and other “accidents”. The railroad officials suspect sabotage and the Van Dorn Agency is called in. Once again our intrepid detective



Issac Bell and his associates are put on the case and once again their efforts resulting in the eventual determination of the identity of the evil doer known as “The Wrecker” are described.

Both books feature a fair amount of railroad activity and as both stories essentially take place in the middle of the

first decade of the twentieth century, the telegraph, being the principal means of communications, is heavily used both by the detectives to search out information and coordinate efforts and by the perpetrators of the crimes to thwart those efforts through wire cutting and wire tapping. The first book even finds our dauntless detective in San Francisco during the famous 1906 earthquake.

These are the only two books I’ve ever read by Cussler so I don’t know whether some of the others he has written also follow a pattern I see in these two books. Both are written in flashback, the first from 1950 to 1906 and the second from 1934 to 1907. Both books feature a principal perpetrator who at first appears to be a generally well respected man and one from whom such vile criminal behavior would not be suspected. Each story also features a single beautiful women either in cahoots with in one case or familiar with in the other, the perpetrator. Both of these women in their respective stories meet Bell and take a shine to him. However, this attraction is one sided as Bell has a fiancée who he also meets in the first book (and who unknowingly works for the Butcher Bandit as his secretary) who is also a beautiful woman and thus Bell is not smitten by these other two. In both books the reader is made well aware of who the culprit is long before the detectives make that determination. Some of the interest in both books is seeing how close the detectives come to uncovering his identity but then just miss some critical piece of information thus delaying their discovery. Both stories feature a rough and tumble chase as the detectives come ever closer to their quarry.

So if you’re looking for a bit of a whodunit during these cold winter months with which to curl up in front of a warm fire, I can recommend both books. Copies were readily available from every one of the many branches of my local library and so I suspect you will have no trouble locating one. Of course copies can be purchased from many sources, including Amazon, as well. I have not read any of the follow-on books in the Issac Bell series but I know that the third book leaves behind the railroad scene and thus my interest waned. But I think if you have any interest in fictional railroad stories, you will enjoy the first two books.

# MORSE TELEGRAPH CLUB

## 2014 SILENT KEYS...

*During the year 2014 the Morse Telegraph Club lost many valuable members. Here are the names and chapters of the MTC members who during 2014 became Silent Keys. You may wish to re-read the brief details of their exciting telegraphic careers. If you are aware of any member, Morse Telegraph Club who became a Silent Key during 2014 but who may not have been published in Dots & Dashes, please send me that information. Thank you. ~Editor Jim Wilson*

*Published in the Winter 2013-2014, Issue #1:*

**CARL M. STORY**

Rochelle "RC" Chapter

**PAUL C. CALHOUN**

C.D. Combs "FN" Chapter

**JOSEPH J. SCHROEDER, JR.**

Members at Large Chapter

**FRANK SONNER**

Members at Large Chapter

**CHARLES WESLEY PERRY**

Maple Leaf "ON" Chapter

**RICHARD CORBELL**

Montreal/Ottawa "GO" Chapter

*Published in the Spring 2014, Issue #2:*

**EARL J. HOLCOMB**

Twin City "MS" Chapter

**JOSEPH C. SCHOENBERG**

Twin City "MS" Chapter

**HARVEY G. TESKE**

Twin City "MS" Chapter

**ROSS E. NASON**

Montreal-Ottawa "GO" Chapter

**BILL MAGNUSSON**

C.D. Combs "FN" Chapter

**WILBUR KOCH**

C.D. Combs "FN" Chapter

**JOHN WERTISH**

C.C. Combs "FN" Chapter

**JEAN PAUL PAQUIN**

Members at Large Chapter

**THOMAS ROGERS**

Members at Large Chapter

**DAVID R. PASSARD**

Hugh Braese Southern California "SQ" Chapter

**BALLARD L. JEWELL**

Washington-Baltimore "WA" Chapter

**HAROLD EUGENE OMAN**

Winnipeg "WG" Chapter

**NANCY KNOTT**

Thomas Edison "TD" Chapter

**EDWARD GEORGE BERRYER**

Saskatoon "KN" Chapter

*Published in the Summer 2014, Issue #3:*

**ROBERT MCQUOWN**

Terre Haute "TH" Chapter

**JAMES WEBB**

Montreal/Ottawa "GO" Chapter

**ROBERT CHARLES JONES**

Dallas-Fort Worth "DF" Chapter

**JOHN A. MASSIE**

Members at Large Chapter

*Published in the Fall 2014, Issue #4:*

**FRED MATULKA**

C.D. Combs Memorial "FN" Chapter

**GENE ZIMMERMAN**

C.D. Combs "FN" Chapter

**GERALD LEE COLE**

CD Combs "FN" Chapter

**HOWARD BIEHL**

Vancouver "DI" Chapter

**KEITH EVAN LEBARON**

Thomas Edison "TD" Chapter

**RICHARD L. THOMAS**

Spokane "SK" Chapter

**JAMES KENNETH HEAPS**

Maple Leaf "ON" Chapter

**LEN FERGUSON**

Maple Leaf "ON" Chapter

**LYNN J. RORABACHER**

Members at Large Chapter

**WILLIAM RICHARD SCHATZ**

Sacramento "SA" Chapter

# 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: proyd@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.

**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 2015 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.

**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:** 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:** Vintage Rule Books of North American Railroads, at least 30 volumes, as far back in time as 1890. To purchase this valuable set of historic documents, call, e-mail, or write to James Gaw at 54 Colonial Drive in Kemptville, Ontario, Canada K0G 1J0, j.gaw@bell.net, or (613) 258-0243

## Reproductions & Other Items for Telegraph Demonstrations and Displays

### Turnkey MorseKOB Interface

- Fully assembled and tested
- Integrated USB adapter – no external cable adapter required
- Also available in RS-232 version

See <https://sites.google.com/site/morsekob/interface> for more information.



Flimsies & Other Forms



Reproduction Fountain Pens and Stylus from early 1900s advertisements



Always willing to discuss and address unique requirements

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## 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*

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Tel: 434-245-7041

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

**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 four current web sites that I find useful:

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

## NOTICES & INVITATIONS

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

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

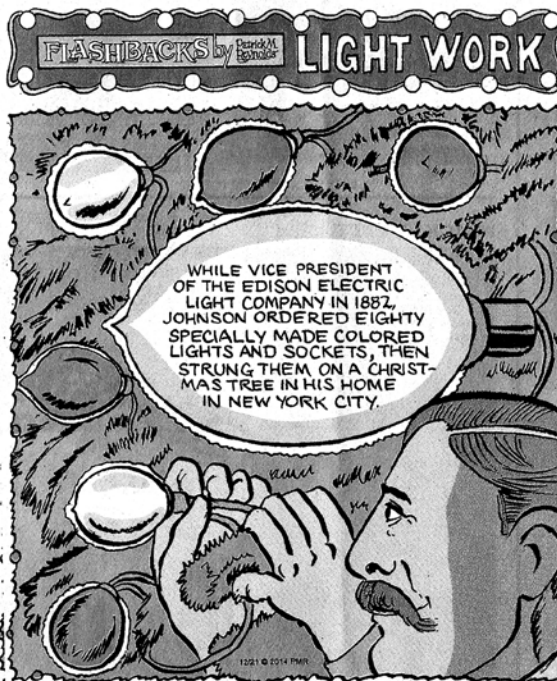
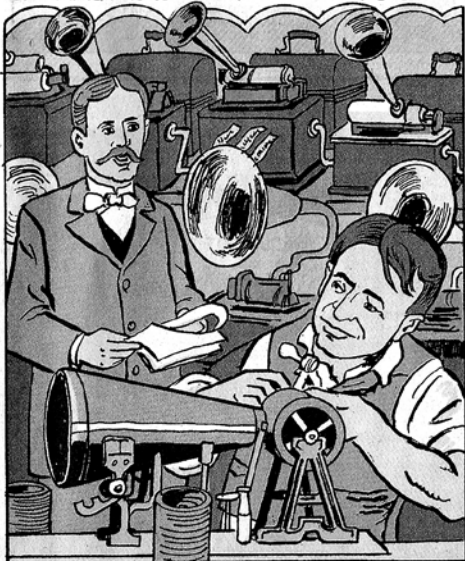
**CANADIAN (HN) HUB**  
1-888-822-3728 (toll free)

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

### **DUES**

U.S. First Class postage \$20.00  
E-mail delivery \$12.00  
Canadian is now by chapter  
Foreign Air Mail postage \$26.00

**EDWARD HIBBERD JOHNSON (LEFT)** RAN THE BUSINESS SIDE OF THOMAS EDISON'S (RIGHT) INVENTIONS AND INDUSTRIES FROM THE 1870s TO THE EARLY 1900s. FOR EXAMPLE, JOHNSON WAS GENERAL MANAGER OF THE EDISON SPEAKING PHONOGRAPH COMPANY IN 1878.



JOHNSON WAS BORN IN CHESTER, PA. IN 1846 AND STARTED HIS CAREER ON THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD AS A TELEGRAPHER. MARRIED WITH THREE CHILDREN, AT AGE 36 JOHNSON BECAME THE FATHER OF ELECTRIC CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTS.



CONTINUED...

Here's a gift idea: DC Neighborhoods - A Cartoon History, full-color selections of former Flashbacks stories, \$18.95, from the Red Rose Studio, 358 Flintlock Drive, Willow Street, PA 17584. Call 1-717-464-3873. [www.redrosestudio.com](http://www.redrosestudio.com)