



Dots & Dashes

What

Hath

God

Wrought

The Official Publication of the Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

Vol. 47, Issue No. 3 • Summer 2022

THE BACKYARD TELEGRAPH

by J. Chris Hausler

Although Morse initially had trouble convincing many folks that the electric telegraph was more than a chimera, once it was proved successful it quickly took off initiating an almost “wild west” environment of expansion. Many small telegraph companies were quickly formed even though their principals frequently had little or no idea what they were doing, nor the financial acumen to pull it off. It was a little like the “dot com” craze of the 1990's. No one wanted to miss out on the possible windfall profits that this new technology might realize. Of course we all know that within a decade or two this all settled down, just like the dot com craze, and by the end of the US Civil War Western Union had essentially become the elephant in the room.

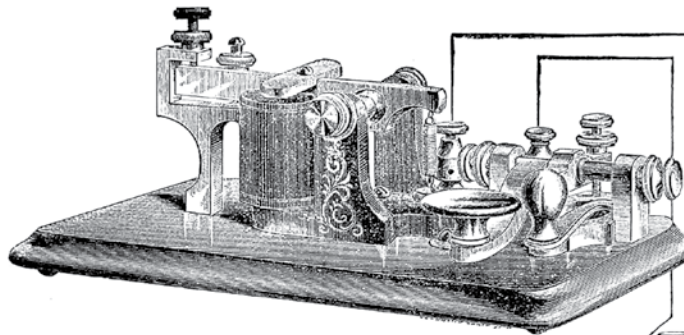
But among some people this didn't exactly end the interest in constructing small telegraph systems. For anyone with just a bit of rudimentary electrical knowledge, and the drive to learn more, the technology to implement the telegraph was readily understandable. What's more the power and importance of this rapid form of communications was evident. Further, for at least 40 years after

its introduction, the telegraph was the only such means of rapid communications available. Whether driven by just an interest or maybe an actual perceived need, small groups of individuals would set up short telegraph networks, with which they believed that they would be able to communicate. Such networks might be particularly useful in

emergency situations such as the need for a doctor or help fighting a fire. But it would also be convenient for more mundane uses such as organizing meetings or just communicating about day to day issues.

Now, how much of this use was actually realized is questionable. We all know that developing even a basic competency as a telegraph operator takes time and a fair amount of practice. But this apparently did not discourage folks from establishing such small telegraph systems. I have

never been able to establish how widespread this practice actually became but have seen references to systems of several miles, or even longer, being established by neighbors, maybe between adjacent farms. Further, it was apparently observed at least by J. H. Bunnell, a major manufacturer of telegraph equipment, that there might be enough



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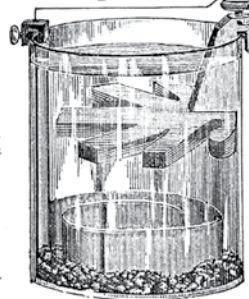
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Dots & Dashes

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The Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

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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.

Donations of telegraph instruments, telegraph ephemera, historical materials or requests for assistance with museum exhibits, telegraph demonstrations, or other consultation should be directed to:

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Local Chapter Members: Members of local chapters should send all correspondence regarding address changes, membership renewals and similar information to their local Chapter Secretary/Treasurer. If you do not know your Chapter Secretary/Treasurer, please inquire with the International Secretary/Treasurer to obtain the necessary contact information.

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 September 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.com



Sidewire

Comments from the
Editor of *Dots & Dashes*

By Jim Wilson



Pandemic Update:

As pandemic restrictions are lifting, telegraph demonstrations have begun to resume. Read Chapter News to hear about telegraph happenings.

For instance, after two years of being cancelled, the annual Civil War Camp Days, resumed on June 18th at Fort Ward Park in Alexandria, VA. My chapter, the Washington Baltimore chapter, typically demonstrates the telegraph at this event.

MTC 's Former International Secretary-Treasurer:

Former MTC Interventional Secretary-Treasurer, Cindy Galyen, died on June 11th. Cindy served the Morse Telegraph Club for about five years. Her letter of resignation was published in the Spring 2015 issue of *Dots & Dashes*; Cindy resigned due to health issues. At the young age of 62, Cindy finally succumbed to those health issues. I attended Cindy's memorial service on June 12th. The church was packed with more than a hundred people. Now Cindy lives only in our memories.

New Computer:

My family purchased for me a new Dell computer to replacing the aging HP computer that I have been using for more than a dozen years. But most of the information for this issue of *Dots & Dashes* is on my old computer. So, I'm not going to change over to the new computer until the SUMMER issue of *Dots & Dashes* goes to press. The new system will likely make it easier and more efficient in producing future issues of *Dots & Dashes*. Yeah!

MTC Board Meeting:

A meeting of the MTC Board members was held by Zoom on June 23rd. During that meeting, MTC International President Jim Wades provided an update on his museum projects. MTC Director John Springer reported

continued on next page ➡

President's Line

Jim Wades, President
Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.



Pending dues increases are on the horizon. For several years now, MTC has been operating at a deficit, primarily due to increased printing and distribution costs associated with *Dots & Dashes*. While we have been able to cover these deficits out of a small endowment and through additional donations, we need to face the reality that costs continue to rise. This situation should not come as a surprise at a time of record inflation and worldwide economic turmoil.

Our goal is to get ahead of the curve slightly by a small increase in dues. The year 2023 will see an increase of \$ 5.00 per United States member. Canadian members will not see an increase during the forthcoming year to help manage the problematic exchange rate in which the Canadian dollar is running at about 75% of US value.

If one renews early during the 2022 calendar year, and in doing so includes an additional donation to the MTC, a very generous anonymous donor has offered to match that donation dollar-to-dollar up to a level of \$ 5000.00. This is a fantastic opportunity to place MTC on a sound financial footing for a number of years, so please consider adding a donation to your dues this year.

Another way you can save some money for the club is by opting in on electronic distribution of *Dots & Dashes*. Most of our members are of an age and generation in which we prefer the printed magazine format delivered to our mailbox. Certainly, this method does offer some advantages for archival storage as well. However, it seems that we now have quite a few younger members who would be quite comfortable with an electronic version. This method eliminates the major cost centers of printing and mailing, thereby benefiting the association by lowering costs.

MorseKOB

It seems that interest in MorseKOB and the

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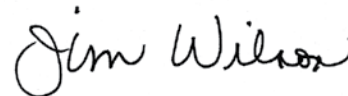
Sidewire continued from previous page

on ORT patch sales. International Secretary-Treasurer, Richard Williams, provided a status report. The next MTC Board meeting is scheduled for September 8th. If you have comments, please send them to Jim Wades.

Recent Conference:

During the three-day conference of the National Space Society (NSS), I handed out sample copies of *Dots & Dashes*. Hundreds of people, mostly professors, engineers, rocket scientists,

and geeks, attended this annual conference in Arlington, Virginia. This June 27-29 conference was fascinating. I considered it good use of my life savings and it was fun to see professors from various universities reading *Dots & Dashes*. It is likely that these folks had never before heard of the Morse Telegraph Club. Now they know who we are.



President's Line continued from previous page

weekly "nets" has dwindled a bit in recent months. MorseKOB is an excellent tool for developing one's skills and abilities using American Morse Code. Having operators available on the wire(s) is essential to conducting effective telegraph demonstrations at museums and special events.

More information on setting up and using "MorseKOB" is available at: www.morsekob.org

Web Page:

Please remember that our web page URL is www.morsetelegraphclub.com

Note the "dot com." Our old "dot org" web page lingers on in static form, thanks to the theft of the

URL by a syndicate from Malta. Unfortunately, Google refers search results to the old web page rather than the new page, so please change any links or references to the new "dot com" page.

Our best wishes to all MTC members for a healthy, happy and pleasant summer season. The poet Edna Saint Vincent Millay wrote "I only know that summer sang in me a little while, that in me sings no more." Take time to enjoy life. Spend time with your family. Go fishing or sit by a quiet lake and read a good novel. Don't forget that summer is brief in so many ways.

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ORT BADGES AVAILABLE

MTC member John Springer has volunteered to offer you historic ORT patches [Order of Railroad Telegraphers]. For a donation to MTC of \$20 you can own an ORT patch. John's address during winter is 3703 SE Jennings Road, Port Saint Lucie, Florida, ZIP 34952. John's summer address is 261 Airline Road in Clinton, Connecticut 06413. The Morse Telegraph Club benefits from this sale.





THE HAPPY FAMILY RECEIVING AND SENDING CONGRATULATIONS ALONG THE LINE. EVERYTHING O. K.

J. H. BUNNELL & Co., 20 PARK PLACE, NEW YORK.

potential business to be worth promoting and encouraging it. In the collection at the AWA we have several drawings, which are included in this article, several mentioning Bunnell. These appear to feature inexpensive "practice" KOB's, probably wound to 20 Ohms, which would work well over such short lines without the need for main line relays. I've also included an 1880 advertisement by Bunnell for such a practice or "learners" set which



SENDING GREETINGS TO FRIENDS ALONG THE LINE.

mentions the option to wind the coils with fine wire for use on short lines of some few miles.

With the explosive growth of the telephone network beginning in the mid 1880's, it is likely that most of these local

telegraph systems started to be abandoned. After all, compared with the telegraph it takes no special skill to use the telephone. That said, young boys still continued to build small telegraph systems connecting their friends well into the 20th Century, but this was more seen as play or as an educational experience, rather than to provide for any important communications. Further they were likely short metallic circuits done in a more urban

environment rather than ground return circuits out in the country. After learning International Morse in the Boy Scouts so I could send and receive by waving flags (I still have my Boy Scout "wig-wag" flag set, don't you) a neighbor friend and I set up a short system between our homes but it was an open circuit configuration using flashlight bulbs for the receiving instruments. My friend's father worked for the local telephone company and, yes, we powered it using the slightly used No. 6 "Blue Bell" dry cells he provided.

For a period of several decades in the late 19th Century however, the telegraph was the only option for rapid communications over more than a line-of-site path. I wonder how many of those who built these small "backyard" systems actually learned enough to become competent telegraph operators and maybe even went on to enter the telegraph work force.



CONNECTING THE LINE TO HOUSE, AND TO THE TELEGRAPH INSTRUMENT INSIDE.



ARRIVAL OF SUPPLIES. EVERYTHING COMPLETE. COMMITTEE AT WORK. (INCLUDING TOWSER.)

THE ADVENTURE OF WORKING FORTY-TWO YEARS ON A RAILROAD

*This article as submitted by the wife of William Reed
At age 98, Bill continues his life adventure.*

William Vernon Reed. Born to Stillman and Alvena Reed, November 14, 1924, in Willmar, MN. My childhood was quite simple, and uneventful. My parents had a tough time during the depression, it got better as time went on.

My life as a student Agent/Telegrapher started in my senior year in Willmar high school. I was offered extra credit. For 2 hours a day I would attend the Morse Telegraph school at the Great Northern Depot in Willmar, MN. This was for the better part of my senior year. They taught Morse Code, accounting that the Great Northern used in their system. They taught the Book of Rules, the Bible of the railroad, the handing of train orders for train movements. I graduated, had 2 days off and went to work as a third trick operator at Cokato, MN. May 28, 1944. This was my first permanent position. The Great Northern started closing stations the next year. In late 1945, Cokato was closed. I was on the extra list. I could be sent to any station in the Division. I worked seven stations. In 1947, I had my second permanent position. When the 5 day a week started in 1949, I bid a second trick position at St. Cloud, MN and was assigned late that year. The position taxed my intellect to the nth degree.

I had four relay offices, 3-line stations, Western Union, all used Morse code. Four train dispatchers, who issued orders for train movements, an interlocking plant, I had three passenger trains on my trick, I sold tickets for. Also made reservations

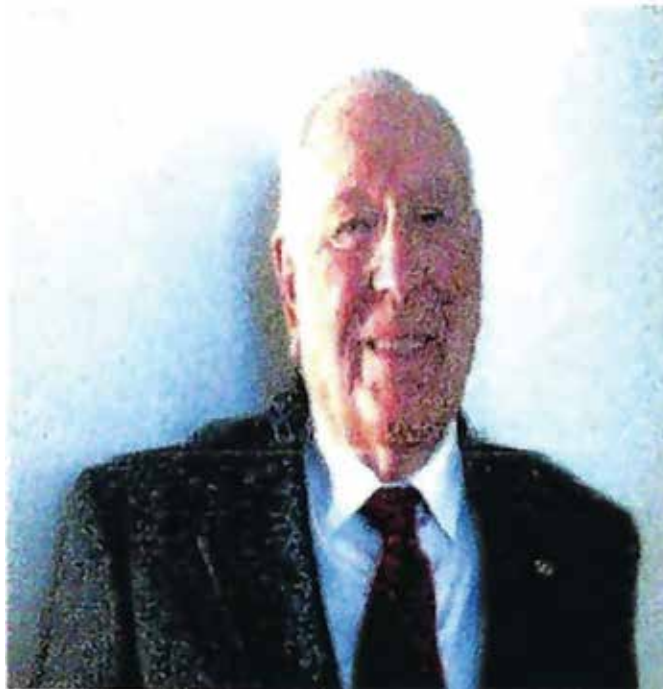
for setting and sleeping over the city phone. I answered any questions about on time trains etc. I took care of the payroll twice a month, for the employees that had been sick or on vacation. In a storm a line could be down.

The wire chief would have me patch connections on the panel to bypass a downed line. I was asked if I wanted to work in the Willmar, MN. relay office. I worked there for about six months. It was a mundane job; I needed more action. They were going to reduce the force by one. A younger person was going to be the one. So, I returned to St. Cloud, MN in his stead.

In 1955, Mr. Holmes head of the Passenger department, offered me a position as Passenger Representative on the new Empire Builder. It had a dome car and a bar car (serving liquor and lunch). four coaches with reserved

seats and four pullman cars with sleeping space. I would leave from St. Paul, MN. in the afternoon and travel to Chicago, IL. I stayed overnight in a charming hotel close to the Union Station. I left Chicago, IL the next morning. We traveled to Seattle, WA. Spent the day in Seattle, WA sightseeing, watched movies, had lunch in varied restaurants. We left Seattle, WA at 3 PM, arriving in St. Paul, MN early afternoon the next day.

On my position, I made comment on all the points of interest. I checked the passenger list and released any empty seats at each station stop. I answered any questions the passengers had, and helped all passengers that needed it.



It was not what I expected. I had been away from home for over a year and time for me to live a more normal life. A new position was open at St. Cloud, MN in my area. It was five days a week with weekend off. I bid it and received it on the 20th of the month. I had to tell the office I was not returning to my position. It did not set well at all.

Everything was uneventful with retirements and new people moving in. The railroad went on with no changes, downsizing, closing stations and cutting help any way it could. Whenever they had a student who needed help I got the job of teaching him the ropes. I was paid a pittance.

In 1970, the Great Northern Railroad merged with connecting railroads, creating the Burlington Northern Railroad. A major change started with the closing of more stations, removal of branch lines and combining duplicated services.

My position was abolished, I moved into a related position in the old Northern Pacific Railroad tower in East St. Cloud, MN. After a few months, I was elected local chairman for the O.R.T (The Order of Railroad Telegraphers) on the new Railroad. I attended the Labor unions convention in Miami FL. Where we were able to get full retirement at 60 years and 30 years' service. I voted for it.

The O.R.T. (The Order of Railroad Telegraphers) and the B.R.A.C. the clerks' unions merged, I work all those positions, because of my background, I could move onto any position my seniority would allow.

When the tower was closed, I moved to the Depot in East St. Cloud as Ticket Agent. My next position was waybill clerk, I made waybills for shipment and kept the tariff files in order. The Trainmaster made me a free agent five times. I was a traveling agent serving the line from St. Joseph, MN to Osakis, MN. My final position was Purchasing Agent for the Material Department in Waite Park, MN.

The railroad offered me a retirement package when I was 60 years old, with 42 years of service. In 2022, I have been retired for 36+ years. I have been involved in several originations. I am a 75-year member of the Golden Sheaf Lodge No. 133 in Morris, MN., a 73-year member of the St. Cloud Chapter No. 10, For 72-years. A life member of Kiwanis International, a 52-year member of the of the St. Cloud Kiwanis club. Serving as President and Lieutenant Governor.

A member of the local GN/BNSF veterans' organization, served as president and Secretary-Treasurer and as Vice President and President on the regional board of directors.

I am a world traveler, a genealogist, publishing five family histories, a writer publishing two books and written my memoirs, a humorist, I love puns, an inventor for my needs, a wheel cane, and I built a round house assisted by one carpenter and sub-contractors in seven months in early 1970's lived there for 30 years.

Bill mailed me a copy of one of his books: "Those Were The Days" ISBN 1934478083

DID YOU KNOW?

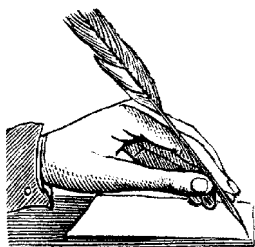
Do you know that other planets and moons within our own solar system have oceans that are deeper than earth's oceans?

About 70% of the earth is covered by oceans. Earth has 1.3 zettaliters of water. One zettaliter equals 1 billion cubic kilometers of water.

Eight of our solar system moons, plus former planet Pluto all have water, which is potentially swimming with life:

- The moon Europa has about twice as much water in its ocean than does earth [2.6 ZL]
- The moon Callisto has about three times the water that is in earth's oceans [6.3 ZL]
- The moon Ganymede has more than 30 times the water in earth's oceans [35.4 ZL]
- The moon Enceladus has much less water [0.01 ZL]
- The moon Titan has more than 15 times the water in earth's oceans [18.6 ZL]
- The moons Triton & Ceres, and planetoid Pluto have unmeasured amounts of water.

If you have a burning question for this column, please send your question and I'll try to answer it. ~Jim



Letters to the Editor

April 11th

I received this about Phil Gnaizdoski today. I don't know if the Maple Leaf Chapter sent it to you. My dad trained both Albin and Phil and they in turn trained their brothers Orville and Edward. Edward, and I think Orville too, changed their names to Manning. I was a good friend of Edward (Eddie) in high school. We often went fishing together.

73, Lavina Shaw
Former MTC International President

Phil Gnaizdoski became a silent key on December 30, 2021. Read his obituary in Silent Keys on page 16

April 12th

I had to learn telegraph in 1962 when I was 19 years old, and am now 77. But I was a telegrapher for only 1 ½ years. Then, I was transferred to the running crew at NW. Today I can still send and receive Morse code, but not at record speeds.

Since I might be one of the youngest members of the Morse Telegraph Club and since we now have *Dots & Dashes* listed in the U.S. Library of Congress, can past issues be listed? And is there any university who has back issues of *Dots & Dashes* that we could forward to the Library of Congress? This would be the start of documenting the knowledge of the telegraph for future generations.

Other items that could be documented include:

- 1) our railway stations with interior and exterior photographs,
- 2) blue prints of rail stations as was done in my home town of St. Thomas, Ontario.
- 3) wiring diagrams for telegraph circuits with dimensions of telegraph desks,
- 4) knowledge of the teletype along with an explanation of the different teletype codes used,
- 5) an explanation of relay office operations with photographs,
- 6) an explanation of CTC, and
- 7) a description of commercial telegraph along with abbreviations and Western Union items.

73,
Robert Weare
St. Thomas, Ontario

Robert included drawings and several photo postcards.

April 24th

I am in the process of reading a biography of Samuel F.B. Morse. The title of the book is *Lightning Man: The Accursed Life of Samuel F.B. Morse*. This is a lengthy 500-page book, detailing the early life of Morse, his artistic career, and finally his work on the telegraph. Morse's own character is quite good, but the "accursed" in the subtitle refers to all the disasters that Morse endured.

In Christ,
Rev. Bob Newman,
Friend of the Morse Telegraph Club

April 28th

I received this from a friend of mine from the SONO Switch Tower Museum. My friend knew that I would be interested in this and she was right.

73,
John Springer
MTC Member

Read the story of Morse's home in New York in the FALL issue of Dots & Dashes

April 28th

Morse home, Locust Grove, (<http://lgny.org>) is a nice place to visit. Twenty plus years ago, the Morse Telegraph Club used to do telegraph displays there. Martin LeRoy was one of the operators back then. But sadly, there is no one in the area available to do this anymore. They did have a small display of telegraph stuff when I last visited about a dozen years ago, but the docents that day didn't seem to know anything about it.

I still haven't been able to find out what happened to Marty. Oh well.

73,
J. Chris Hausler
MTC International Vice President

April 28th

Here are two Web pages featuring information about Texas Railroad interlocking towers. I want you to read the third paragraph of the site titled, *Texas Railroad Towers Website*, so that you can see that I had a hand in getting this project launched in 1986. I hope this information will be of interest and benefit to you and to MTC members.

<http://txrrhistory.com/towers>

And here is the Web page for the "Texas RR interlocking towers."

<http://txrrhistory.com>

I will transmit an additional e-mail containing scans of the two separate issues of "The Cross Tie," magazine that I edited on a part time basis between 1983 and 1988 while working full time as a train dispatcher in San Antonio.

**Best Wishes,
MTC Member
Bill Neill
Conroe, Texas**

April 29th

I think they are banning the most expensive heater that happens to make a little incandescent light. In my kitchen, I have nine 75-watt lights in the ceiling. In the summer, it is noticeably hot because those lights make about 650 watts of heat. It probably takes 1800 watts of power to remove that heat with the air conditioner. LED's produce no noticeable heat. The incandescent bulb costs \$3.85 and the LED costs \$4.65 but I am not replacing them every year.

**73,
Mark KB8YJV**

Readers, Mark is referring to a newspaper article published April 27, 2022 titled, "Incandescent bulbs being phased out." Retailers will be banned from selling inefficient bulbs on July 1, 2023.

May 1st

Remember that a telegraph wire is a lot like an Internet chat room. One person talks (or more correctly writes) at a time and everyone else in the chat room, or in our case on the wire, gets the message. A telegraph wire is a series circuit. The key and the main line receiving instrument whether main line relay or main line sounder is in series in the one wire. That's why one wire (with a ground return) suffices.

However, in most cases, telegraph messages were just between two of the offices on the wire. One example where a message would be sent to more than one office would be a railroad dispatcher sending a train order affecting two trains, so the order would be sent simultaneously to two stations, each ahead on one of the two trains.

For a simple example, let's say that Afton needs to send a message to Charlottesville. The operator would open his key, thus opening the series circuit, and then send "MO MO MO AF" then close his key

The Charlottesville operator, hearing his office call MO, would open his key and then respond, "I MO" then close his key. This tells the Afton operator at AF that office MO is ready to receive from AF. The Afton operator would then open his key, send his message, closing his key when done. Receipt would then likewise be acknowledged by MO. So anyway, these unique in that area and on that wire, one or two letter designations called "office calls" were in active use on the telegraph wire to identify each station in a communication.

Again, everyone else on that wire hears this message but as it is not for them, would most likely completely ignore it. That said, in idle moments, telegraphers might play a game of checkers over the wire and likely many of the rest of the stations on that wire would be listening in and possibly kibitzing (the squares on the checker board would be numbered so anyone interested could set up their own board and follow along.) There might also be broadcast, great interest items like political conventions and speeches by important folks. These might be so broadcast in small towns during such events it was not unknown for the local populace to gather at the station as the station agent/telegrapher would report on the action as received on the wire.

FYI, in 2012, I rode on my friend's private rail car, "the Federal," on the former N&W line from Roanoke (VA) through Waynesboro (VA) and up to Front Royal (VA). We were on our way back to Washington (DC) on that year's all private car AAPRCO convention train, where we left the line to get over to Washington's Western Station, the train's final destination. Unfortunately, the last photos that I took on that trip that year were in Roanoke where we visited the O. Winston Link Museum in the preserved train station, and the Virginia Museum of Transportation.

As to Western Union, teleprinter technology made quick inroads. I have come across data saying that their traffic was handled 20% by teleprinter in 1914, 75% in 1927, 95% in 1941 (from a typewritten document stored in the history division of our local main library, which holds a number of WU and AT&T

items from that same collection). That said, I have read an article in Railroad magazine from the late 1940's saying that roughly a third of all rail mileage in the U.S. was still dispatched entirely by telegraph at that time. One expects that this was more frequently on branch lines.

A former member of MTC, now deceased, Tom Bjorkman, told me he was still dispatching telegraph only branches on the Erie RR in New Jersey into the 1960's.

Western Union was focusing more on their "end user" businesses. Starting in the mid 1920's, AT&T had developed electronic "carrier" technology, sending multiple data streams on one voice grade pair using what we not call "modems," and WU found it more economic to lease their long-distance circuits from AT&T rather than to maintain all that pole line along the railroads, which they therefore left to the railroads.

Railroads were still quite dependent on that pole line for communications, both telegraph and telephone, not to mention signal circuits, and I think more or less as a service to their passenger business, kept wires linked to WU so to send telegrams for them. That said, MTC member Ed Trump, who was working on the D&RGW in the late 1960's, said that the D&RGW was still taking main battery in Denver for their telegraph circuits from WU. It is my understanding that WU finally dropped all Morse telegraph telegram service in 1966.

As to wire in the abandoned road, normally railroad telegraph wires would not be run through a tunnel, but over the hill, bypassing the tunnel. Making the tunnel big enough to house both the passage of a train and the wires would be much more expensive than running the wires over the tunnel hill and the existing roadway ROW would still provide easy access to the pole line.

73,
Chris Hausler
MTC International Vice President

May 2nd

I want to write a report on our successful Morse Day celebration here in Florida. I will write up the Florida FX Chapter event and include photos.

73,
MTC Member
Greg KF5N,
Florida Chapter
Plantation, Florida.

Read a report about the Florida Chapter under Chapter News, page 13

May 3rd

I am getting rid of some files before I lose my sight although. I have a typewritten list of Morse Dial-up offices with the calls and telegrapher's telephone numbers. This list was given to me a number of years ago. It was compiled and typed by Mike Gemus, a MTC member from Sudbury, ON, who passed away shortly afterwards. Would this list be of any use to MTC members or the MTC archives? A large number of people on the list are now deceased, including Bill Dunbar and Keith LeBaron.

73,
Lavina Shaw
Former MTC International President

May 3rd



A significant anniversary comes up later this month (May), when the Reading & Northern runs the first public passenger excursion with their newly restored ex-Reading 4-8-4, No 2102. The May 28th trip will originate at the Outer Station just north of downtown Reading and go to Jim Thorpe and back. This train excursion has sold out, but you can buy tickets for similar trips in July, August, and September at rbmmrr-passenger.com/rambles.

I made my first train photo, my very first of anything, on Saturday May 27th 1972 of the very same locomotive as the 2102 pulled a High Iron Company excursion south from Elizabeth, N.J. to Washington, DC on the Baltimore & Ohio's "Royal Blue Route." My father had just handed down to me his first camera, a 35mm Olympus Pen FT (Dad had moved up to a Mamiya twin-lens 2 ¼), and standing a few feet apart somewhere along the B&O the two of us pressed the shutter release buttons at exactly the same instant. I turned seven years old later that year. My father's photo appeared in the article that I wrote about him

in the December 2017 Trains Magazine; mine appeared in Train's May 2022 issue.

What a joy it was that my father and I could celebrate a half-century (plus one day) of photographing trains together by chasing the #2102 together. We have chased trains together for more and 54 years and we hope to see as many of you as possible at trackside. Please let me know if we can expect your company somewhere or other along the way and perhaps, we can meet for lunch in Thorpe. Most of you receiving this message know me by sight, but you will also know us by our vehicle. Keep an eye out for the 18-inch diameter magnet on the doors. (50th Anniversary 1972-2022).

MTC Member
Oren B. Helbok
Bloomsburg, PA

May 5th

In 2021 the TD Chapter donated \$500 to the Morse Telegraph Club. In 2022 the TD Chapter also donated another \$500, the third donation of \$500, totaling \$1,500 donated by the TD Chapter to the Morse Telegraph Club.

As you can see by the Roster Spreadsheet and Annual Report that I provided, we still have sufficient funds in the TD Chapter bank account for normal expenses. Since the membership in the TD chapter is scattered, we have not met in person for years. Might as well put the money to work for *Dots & Dashes* as postage is going nuts.

It is sad, but Keith LeBaron (deceased) told me years ago about some chapter officers who passed away and the chapter funds went into probate, so MTC lost out. I do not want that to happen, so my wife and I are both on the MTC TD chapter bank account and we both have wills. Just my two cents worth and food for thought.

My wife is doing great with her new aortic heart valve. In fact, after two years, we went to the very large Ypsilanti District Library where I met with the Activities Director. The Director has coordinated past telegraph presentations. She recommended that I set up an unscheduled mini-telegraph demonstration in the lobby during this summer. Something more formal can be set-up in the library in the fall, with time to advertise it in the library newspaper. It was the very first visit for my wife and I to the library in two years.

When our Michigan Central Railroad Freight house shut down year ago, I moved things to the

library. However, because of insurance issues, the Freight house was remodeled for events such as weddings, not open to the public.

Before the COVID pandemic hit the states, I had a mini-telegraph set up in the lobby of the library. This drew a big crowd. It was a big hit! Of course, we still must be cautious because the COVID variant is predicated to flare up the summer. My exposure to COVID would not be good for the health of me or my wife!

I have lot of railroads memorabilia a book and do not know what to do with the stuff. I have lots of money invested in telegraph demos over the years.

Al Skornicka,
MTC TD Chapter Secretary-Treasurer

A huge THANK YOU to the TD chapter for donating \$1,500 to MTC to help keep telegraph history alive!

May 10th

Here is advice of an upcoming Zoom presentation from the Pacific Northwest that I think will be of great interest as those of us with any railroad experience have had some personal encounters with railroad beaneries, the people who make them function, and the nutrition ladled out therein. Unfortunately, this presentation comes with one major drawback. It conflicts with Brother Springer's weekly zoom railroad slide show that is scheduled to begin at 7PM EST while this Zoom presentation begins at 6PM Pacific time.

Information about this presentation comes to me from Ed Bernsten who, as a member of the Evergreen Chapter of the Morse Telegraph Club, was recently a participant in a Zoom presentation by John Springer and John Garafolo about the resurrection of SONO Tower in South Norwalk, Connecticut. I know Ed from his days as a train dispatcher on the NP at Tacoma, Washington, back in 1968 and 1969.

Best Wishes,
Bill Neill,
Conroe, Texas

May 27th

The Gulf Colorado & Santa Fe was one of two Santa Fe operating entities in the state of Texas. Functionally, it existed between Pauls Valley, Oklahoma and Galveston, Texas, with a few branch lines radiating from Fort Worth and Temple. The other line was the Panhandle and

Santa Fe that operated primarily within and across the Texas Panhandle, interconnecting with the AT&SF Transcom between Kansas City and Albuquerque.

San Augustine is on the line between Longview and Beaumont, in the deepest darkest recesses of the spooky and primitive East Texas Piney Woods, where a junction with a line from Temple (passing through Conroe) is made at Cleveland, Texas. The primary commodity generated at San Augustine

was pine logs sawn into six-foot lengths destined for a now defunct (and a National Superfund site) International Paper Company mill, just north and west of Beaumont.

73,
MTC Member
Bill Neill

SAMUEL F.B. MORSE GAVE THE FIRST PUBLIC TELEGRAPH DEMONSTRATION 178 YEARS AGO IN BALTIMORE. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WAS LESS THAN IMPRESSED.

By Frederick N. Rasmussen from The Baltimore Sun, Jun 02, 2022

A neglected anniversary of sorts came and went May 24; it was the first public demonstration of Samuel F.B. Morse's telegraph 178 years ago at B&O Mount Clare Station, today the home of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Museum.

As with so many things, tragedy can be the mother of invention, and Morse's development of the telegraph was born from a deep personal tragedy.

Samuel Finley Breese Morse, born in 1791 in Charlestown, Massachusetts, was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Yale University and made his living as a portrait painter.

He was in Washington working on a commission in 1825 when word reached him that his wife, Lucretia Pickering Walker Morse, had died of a heart attack in New Haven, Connecticut, shortly after giving birth to their third child.

In an era when news traveled via horseback, railroad, steamboat and carrier pigeon, it took seven days for word to reach him in Washington from New Haven of his wife's death, and by the time he returned home, her funeral already had been held, and she was buried in New Haven's Grove Street Cemetery.

It was during his tenure at Yale that Morse began attending lectures on electromagnetism presented by Benjamin Silliman and Jeremiah Day, and in 1832, while returning from Europe by ship, he made the acquaintance of Charles Thomas Jackson, a Bostonian who was also an acknowledged expert in electromagnetism.

Morse then began experimenting with what he called "galvanic fluid," his term for electromagnetism, believing that it was possible to send messages over a single copper wire, but the outside world's faith in

such a phenomenon was limited.

In the face of wide skepticism, Morse obtained from Congress a \$30,000 appropriation that allowed him to pursue his work for what eventually became known as the telegraph.

Morse also created what's known as Morse Code, the dot and dash code used for sending messages. Morse used different combinations of dots and dashes to represent the letters in the English alphabet and the 10 digits.

His friend, Baltimorean John H. B. Latrobe, legal counsel to the B&O Railroad, eventually convinced the reluctant railroad's president, Louis McLane, who thought Morse was nothing more than a crank and a dreamer, to allow him to string his "singing wire" from a basement room in the Capitol in Washington along the railroad's right of way to the station at Mount Clare in Baltimore.

"By the way," McLane told Latrobe one day, according to *The Baltimore Sun*, "there was a man in here named Morse this morning. He has a scheme to dig a trench along the railroad and place a wire in it and talk over it. It's all nonsense of course and the government has no right to throw away the people's money in that way."

"Mr. McLane," replied Latrobe, "you have been Minister to the Court of St. James, you have been Secretary of the United States Treasury and now you are president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad: but I will tell you this man's name will live when your name and that of your children, yes, and those of your grandchildren's children, shall be forgotten."

Curiously, on the day before Morse was to publicly unveil his invention, there was no mention of it in

continued at the bottom of page 14

CHAPTER NEWS

Florida "FX" Chapter



Attached is a photo of Florida Chapter members who attended Morse Day 2022. In the photo: seated is Chapter Vice President Warren McFarland; standing left to right are Chapter Treasurer Clyde Francis, member Rachael Kelly, Chapter President Robert Feeney, members John Feeney, Don Andrus, and Greg Raven. (Clyde and Warren are both former railroad telegraphers.)

At the invitation of the Central Florida Railroad Museum, located in Winter Garden, Florida near Orlando, eight members of the Florida Chapter celebrated Morse Day by offering Morse demonstrations to the museum's visitors, using a variety of vintage telegraph instruments.

Besides catching up on what the members have been up to, Samuel Morse's birthday was celebrated with a birthday cake which was baked by a family member of two of our long time Chapter members. This continued a tradition started many years ago on Morse Day.

It was good to hear that half of those Chapter members present had, within the past year and despite the effects of the pandemic, been able to do Morse demonstrations at various historical events in central and south Florida.

Meanwhile, two separate on-line Morse connections were up and running with other chapters to celebrate this special event.

Don Andrus
Florida Chapter

Evergreen "SX: Chapter

The Evergreen Chapter met on April 30th on line and by using phones.

All participants were introduced. The Chapter Secretary-Treasurer's report was received. Recent and upcoming events were described.

As the program, International MTC Director John Springer introduced members to the SONO Switch Tower Museum, which is located at 77 Washington Street in Norwalk, Connecticut.

A good time was had by all members attending.

73, Kevin Saville,
President,
Evergreen Chapter

Maple Leaf Chapter

The Maple Leaf Chapter (MLC) has been reactivated starting in April 2022 after two years of inactivity. Secretary-Treasurer W. Donald Laycock died on Jan 24, 2022, and that fact did not get to the members for a couple of months. His illness prior to death prevented him from putting out the annual call for the 2022 dues payment. In March I was made aware of his demise, and I contacted the MTC Secretary-Treasurer and offered to take up the duties of the vacancy and was accepted. MLC member Chris Ricketts had contacted the widow of Donald Laycock and arranged to get his MLC files. These were delivered to me in April and on April 21st I issued a call for dues payment based on the contact list MTC provided me. I also called for a Spring meeting for the date of May 28 and arranged it at the Canadian Warplane Museum at Mount Hope Ontario. Six MLC members attended with two guests. We discussed the situation of our change of Secretary-Treasurer and the vacancy in the President position due to the severe illness of Tom Hamblin which for several years had prevented him from fulfilling the duties of that office, and now he resides in a care facility and his partner has declared that he is incapable of doing such duties. I have put out a second call for dues, asking that 2022 dues be paid by June 30th this year to keep members in good standing, and I also requested that any member interested in becoming President to so declare and to stand for election at our Fall Membership Meeting which has been set

CHAPTER NEWS

for Wednesday Oct 5, 2022.

The Maple Leaf Chapter membership roll has been reduced from twenty eight members listed at the beginning of year 2022 to fourteen paid up at present. The Maple Leaf bank account has not had any deductions registered this year other than the monthly fee, and the balance on June 16, 2022 was \$1047.55. The payment to the MTC of dues collection this year is expected to be made early in July. I have not yet calculated what dues and costs

have not been dealt with prior to 2022, expecting that a search of the records in my possession may indicate a need to make a further remittance.

The future of the Maple Leaf Chapter looks grim, and perhaps next year the members may look to Grand Chapter to retain connection with the MTC.

**Charles Beckett,
Secretary-Treasurer,
Maple Leaf Chapter**



Welcome Aboard!

NEW MEMBERS OF MTC

Jim Kavachs of Palmyra, PA

Robert Leichner of Menlo Park, CA

Craig Wadsworth of Pleasant Plains, IL

Carol Fox of The Villages, FL

Kate Jones of Winstead, MN

Shannon Collis of Eden, NY

Sandra Gniazdoski of Subury, ON

Recent New member John Pezzano tells us that he earned his Novice Class ham radio license back in the early 1960's when he was still in high school. John notes that he now has an MS in electronics engineering and that he put together a unique Morse code telegraph at the Apple Valley

RR Club's museum and layout in Hendersonville, NC. This required John to learn American Morse code and to get the system working for museum visitors. John says that his design of that Morse code museum system will be submitted to *Dots & Dashes* for readers to study and perhaps duplicate.

Morse continued from page 12

The Sun, but on May 7 and again on May 18, the newspaper covered it.

"Professor Morse's electro-magnetic telegraph, in course of construction between Washington and Baltimore, is now in full operation," the newspaper reported in its May 7 editions, which conveyed the news that the Whig convention that was held in Baltimore had selected Henry Clay as its presidential nominee. "The fluid traversed the whole 22 miles and back again — making 44 miles — in no perceptible part of a second."

A passenger aboard a B&O train bound for Baltimore learned of the death of his father, Mr.

Godsby, former proprietor of the National Hotel in Washington, when the train paused at Relay, and he received the news that had been telegraphed ahead to the station by the new electro-magnetic telegraph, the newspaper reported May 18.

On May 24, 1844, the first public demonstration of Morse's telegraph took place at Mount Clare Station, when he tapped out the Biblical quotation, "What Hath God Wrought" from Washington to Baltimore.

Morse immediately saw the vast commercial possibilities of his invention when he tapped out a second message: "Have you any news."

The next day, The Sun reported the event in a one

continued at the bottom of page 21

A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

Recall that the new column, "A Penny for Your Thoughts," began its debut in the previous issue of Dots & Dashes. This new column is intended to be a safe place for you to air your thoughts.

Previous issues listed in this column included the unprovoked war by Russia on Ukraine, inflation in the prices of everything, the impending climate disaster, issues with growing older, the perceived decline in democracy, and the rise in worldwide crime.

Adding to the list is a new comment by MTC member Ronald Berwager. Ron comments that he used to be able to hear automobile engines and to hear cash registers. Now, Ron says he is losing

his ability to hear clearly. Ron's problem is not uncommon. As we age, we typically lose part of normal human hearing range. May I recommend a new pair of modern electronic hearing aids? My sweet wife, Becky and I both have accepted these modern devices.

So, what's on your mind that you are willing to share with our intelligent compassionate MTC members?

ON HALLOWEEN NIGHT, THE GREAT PUMPKIN...

Ted WB3AVD

"...rises out of the pumpkin patch that he thinks is the most sincere ... and flies through the air with his bag of toys to all the children." Thus spake Linus when the animated special *It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown* premiered on that long-ago evening of October 27, 1966, preempting



Photo 1

My Three Sons on our family's B&W TV (which at that time, only got two channels!). And of course, for me and my 10-year-old twin sister, it was the event of the season.

Let's add another half-century (plus a little) to that, and you'd

catch me in the shop scroll-sawing a Victorian-era Christmas ornament out of 1/8" aluminum plate. The resulting leafy pattern somehow suggested a pumpkin patch (at least to me!) ... and from so slender a prompt sprouted The Great Pumpkin KOB (see Photo 1).

This is another of my occasional KOB's (a Key



Photo 2

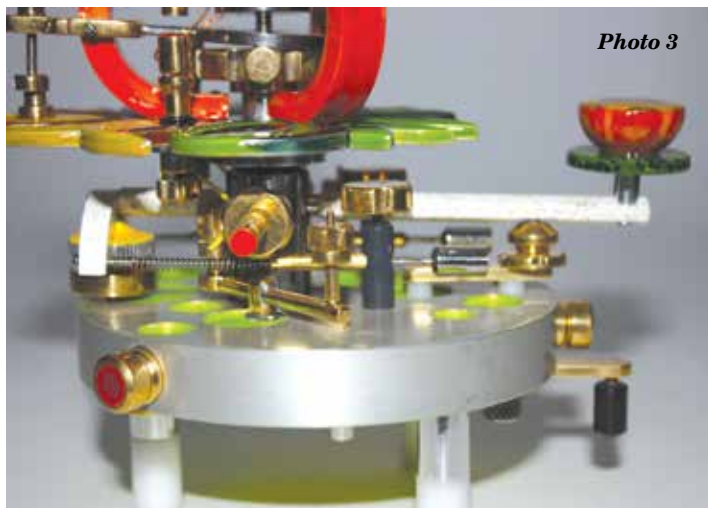


Photo 3

on Board which combines a telegraph key with a sounder), conceptually modeled on ‘seasons’-- wherein I’ve sought to substantially embellish the traces of ornamental treatment which sometimes appeared on lovely older instruments. (My “late winter” KOB appeared in Summer 2019 *Dots & Dashes*, and my autumnal KOB in the Fall 2020 issue.) The photo shows that the sounder comprises the top half of the KOB, while the straight key occupies the lower story. The upright orange crescents which surround the sounder’s electromagnetic coil are meant to suggest the shape of a pumpkin, as is the smaller orange orb atop the coil.

Let’s have a closer look at the sounder, see Photo 2. Here the clapper can be seen (the flat silver metal disk) immediately below the bottom of the coil. Its lever runs horizontally to the left, and hinges on the orange pumpkin slice visible on the left side of the photo. The two adjusting knobs, also visible to the left of the coil, are upper and lower travel limits for the sounder lever. The “leaves” of the pumpkin constitute the filagree base (yellow and green) upon which the sounder sits.



Photo 4

The straight key resides between the pumpkin “leaves” and a circular base which is visible in Photo 3. Given that it’s Halloween, the key’s lever has a bone-like aspect, and the paddle itself (at the right side of the photo) is another pumpkin (though sliced in half!). Note that the key is tensioned by horizontal springs which can be adjusted by moving their plungers back and forth. The circular yellow adjustment below the lever at the left side of the photo is the key’s upper travel limit. The key’s lower contact is visible just below the lever on the right side of the photo (close to the paddle).

I found the single-coil sounder to be quite loud to my much-degraded hearing, though being strictly a CW operator (I haven’t learned American Morse yet), I don’t get much use out of it. Thus I designed the KOB so that

the sounder and the key can be easily separated. Photo 4 shows the detached straight key, which I’ve used with great delight on-the-air (it’s a beautiful slow- to moderate- speed key). The legs beneath the circular base can also be shortened—as



Photo 5

seen here--should one desire a lower hand position.

A final note on that circular base: because it’s Halloween, the base is meant to suggest a full moon. The greenish circular “craters” visible in Photo 4 are the “seas” (the maria) on the moon—in their proper locations. And just for the heck of it, I found a glow-in-the-dark powdercoat which I applied to the moon, see Photo 5! All initial colors were applied via powder-coating, after which Altoona, PA artist Frank Modico—a former railroad welder and boilermaker—applied the painted stained-glass-like finishes which brought the KOB to exuberant life.

Linus (in *The Great Pumpkin*) lamented that “there are three things I’ve learned never to discuss with people: religion, politics, and the Great Pumpkin.” He was certainly right on the first two, but all of us who saw this KOB develop over a period of months couldn’t restrain our

recollections of the latter! A sure sign that we've begun to succumb that that particular vice of the aged (as someone once said) ... nostalgia!

Photo 1: The Great Pumpkin KOB. The sounder comprises the top half of the instrument, with the straight key below. The orange paddle appears at right, atop the bone-white lever.

Photo 2: A close look at the sounder, showing the coil within its orange 'pumpkin.' The clapper is the round silver disk immediately below the coil. The two major adjustments at left are upper and lower travel limits for the clapper. The 'leaves' below the pumpkin are taken from a Christmas ornament scroll saw pattern.

Photo 3: the straight key, with paddle at right. The key is tensioned by two horizontal springs which can be adjusted by a set of plungers which move back and forth to stretch or relax the springs.

Photo 4: the straight key detached from the sounder, with paddle at right. The green circular depressions are the "seas" or maria on the full moon.

Photo 5: the full moon at night with its phosphorescent powdercoat. Photo by Dave Modico, by cell phone!

"30" SILENT KEYS

News of our brothers and sisters who have closed the key



Edmonton "MO" Chapter

DAVID G. McMINN, age 90, of Edmonton Alberta passed away on June 20, 2022. Dave was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba on September 22, 1931.

At the age of 19, Dave arrived from Winnipeg in the Kamloops Chief Dispatchers Office for the Canadian National Rail in the summer of 1951. From there, he was assigned to the midnight shift as a railroad telegrapher at Spences Bridge. Next, Dave landed the high paying position of Operator on a work train at Copper Creek on the Ashcroft Sub.

In 1952, "suitcase Simpson", who had more seniority, bumped Dave from his position. So, Dave progressed to an Operator job in Boston Bar, where he met Margaret, who became the love of his life. They married in 1953.

Among the locations Dave worked were Ashcroft, Birch Island, Blue River and Lucerne. To further his career as a Dispatcher, in 1959 Dave and his family moved to Kamloops. Then in 1962, an opportunity took his family to Edmonton, where he served as the Relief Chief Dispatcher in Calder. Further advancements led him to the shared position of Operations Coordinator in the CN Tower in downtown Edmonton, which was a 12-hour shift.

On November 30, 1989, after 38 years of railroad service with the Canadian National Railway, Dave retired. In his retirement years, Dave and Margaret enjoyed golfing and traveling. He spent

many happy times with his children: Vicki, Debra, and Rob.

After a long and happy life, Dave cashed in his chips.

Thanks to Debra, Dave's daughter, for this interesting summary of her father's railroad & telegraph career.

Maple Leaf "ON" Chapter

PHILIP F. GNIAZDOSKI, age 98, of Sudbury, Ontario, died on December 30, 2021. Phil was born on August 10, 1923.



After 36 years of service, Phil retired from the CN Railroad. He also worked for Via Rail for a short time and served for 12 years as a Town Counselor for the Town of Coniston and the Town of Nickel Centre. Phil was proud to be a longtime member of the Morse Telegraph Club, of the

Sudbury Game and Fish Association and of the Lions Club.

Phillip's wife Helen, passed on in August 2006. Phil and Helen successfully raised their daughter Sandra and son Brian.

Thanks to Brian Gniazdoski for this information about his cherished dad.

Sacramento “SA” Chapter

REED SHACKLEFORD passed away in April 2022. He was a long-term member of the Morse Telegraph Club and served for a time as President of the Sacramento (SA) Chapter.

Thanks to Reed’s daughter, Barbara, for this brief information.

Washington-Baltimore “WA” Chapter



ROBERT E. BRYANT, founder and chairman of Virginia’s largest short line, the family-owned Buckingham Branch Railroad, died May 8 at his home. He was

87.

After a long career with the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway and its successors, Chessie System and CSX Transportation, Bryant formed the short line in 1988 by acquiring a 16-mile-long line, the former C&O Buckingham Branch between Bremono and Dillwyn. The latter town remains the company’s corporate headquarters.

Over time, Bryant expanded operations to form a 280-mile network with four divisions, the largest of which includes the 192-mile-long former C&O main line between Richmond, Charlottesville, and Clifton Forge.

Starting as a C&O messenger at age 18 the day after he graduated from high school, Bryant moved up in management and retired from a CSX marketing position in Baltimore in 1988. He and his wife Annie returned to their roots in Virginia and started the Buckingham Branch Railroad with one locomotive and two employees, operating their first train on March 6, 1989.

The company grew exponentially in 2004 with the lease of CSX’s Richmond-Clifton Forge line, the Richmond & Allegheny Division. In addition to handling local business, the line sees overhead CSX westbound freights and Amtrak’s triweekly Cardinal passenger train between New York,

Washington, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, and Chicago.

Five years later, the company took over operations on Norfolk Southern’s 59-mile line between Burkeville and Clarksville, a former Southern Railway route. In 2018, the company began operating on a 5-mile line between Virginia Beach and Norfolk. The company now fields seven train crews and has about 80 employees.

As the Buckingham Branch grew, it became a family business, with Bryant’s wife Annie (vice chair of board of directors), a son, Mark (CEO), and a daughter, Lois Bryant Frank (corporate secretary), all playing key roles in the company.

Another shortline owner, Alan Maples, remembers Bryant fondly. “I met him in 1984, when he was with Chessie in Baltimore,” he said. “We had a joint move coming to [our] Everett Railroad out of the Port of Baltimore. He was very kind to me, a young railroader at the time. He came out to see us, and see our railroad. He showed a real interest in short-line railroading.

“He was a very successful railroader, always a gentleman, always gracious to everyone. He always tried to do things right, and always showed interest in all the people he worked with, and who worked for him.”

In founding the Buckingham Branch, Maples said, Bryant was “the right man at the right place at the right time. He was a great friend.”

Bryant was a founding member of the Virginia Railroad Association, a group of Class II and III short lines and terminal roads, and a fellow of the Virginia Rail Policy Institute, a freight-and-passenger-rail advocacy group. In addition, he was a member of the Clifton Forge-based Chesapeake & Ohio Historical Society, and the Richmond-based Old Dominion Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. The railroad has partnered with the chapter in running passenger excursion trains on the original segment of the Buckingham Branch Railroad.

In addition to his wife of 66 years, Bryant is survived by two sons, a daughter, several grandchildren and a great-grandson.

Thanks to Ron Richie, KARKA, for this interesting information.

MTC INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER, RICHARD WILLIAMS, VOTED A HOMETOWN HERO IN CORONADO, CALIFORNIA.

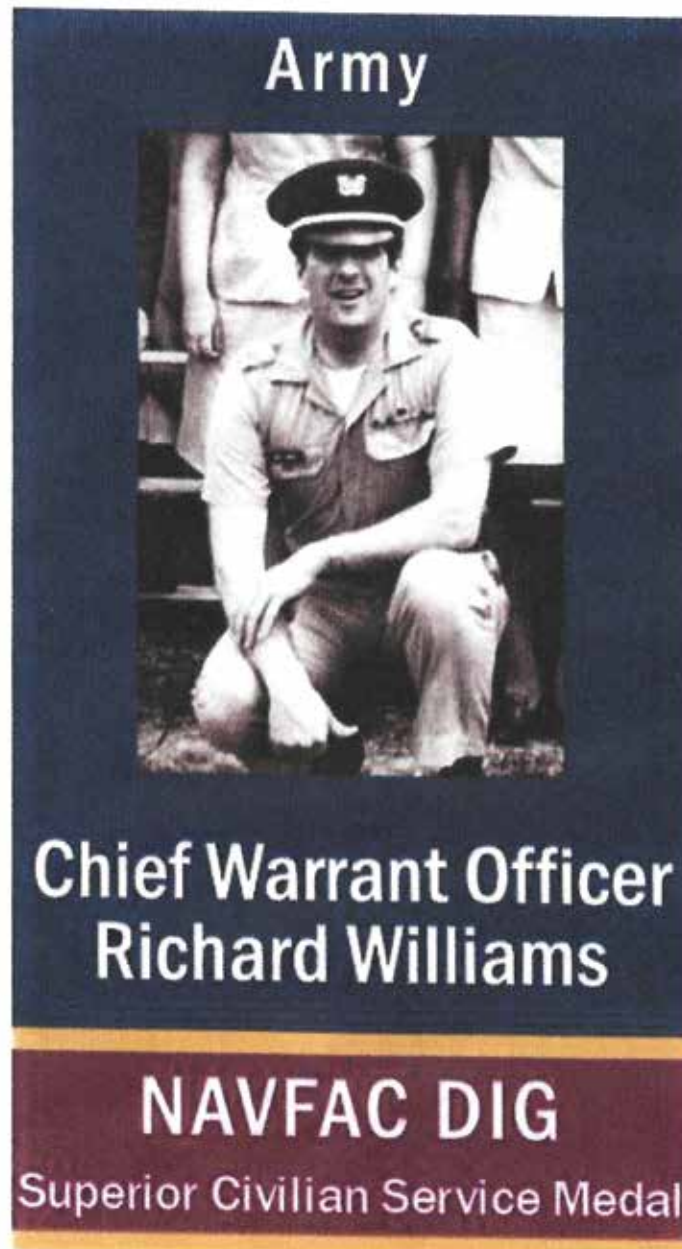
Army Chief Warrant Officer Richard Lee Williams was born November 13, 1935, in Perry Point, Maryland. The oldest of six siblings, he started his working career as a paperboy. In 1945, while hawking “War Ends”-headlined newspapers for 3 cents, he was excited to get a nickel. Richard Williams’ unique experience combines 44 years of service to the military for both the Army and the Navy. He was drafted in 1958 and reported to the 714th Transportation Battalion, Railway Operating, Steam & Diesel Electric at Fort Eustis, Virginia. When the Battalion adjutant asked Williams to volunteer to be a clerk, he declined, saying he wanted to work on the railroad. He was immediately assigned to the track maintenance gang carrying railroad ties. A few weeks later, Williams reconsidered and became BN clerk. In 1960, Williams transferred to the Army reserve 717th Transportation Battalion (railway operating) in Philadelphia and became a dual status Administrative Supply Technician. Steadily promoted, Sgt. First Class Williams transferred to HQ 79th Army Reserve Command. Promoted to Warrant Officer

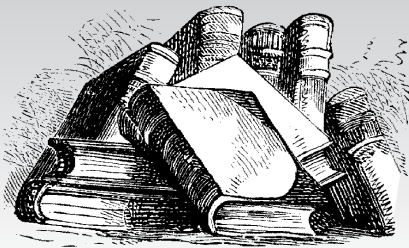
in 1969, he started college, and graduated in 1972. As a recent college graduate, Williams became a criminal investigator with the IRS serving on the team investigating Spiro Agnew’s fraud. His

Army reserve career continued with the 344th Data Processing Unit and the 55th Materiel Management Command. In 1980, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Williams retired from the Army.

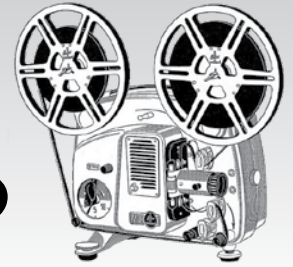
Moving to Washington D.C., Williams worked for Department of Labor and then Navy Facilities Engineering Command Inspector General office. He spent 19 years at NAVFAC serving as Deputy Inspector General from 1988 to 2007, receiving the Navy Superior Civilian Service Medal. An avid runner for 45 years, Williams and his wife Kitt met at a road race. They moved to Coronado in 2007. He has supported his community as a Coronado Historical Association docent, an officer in Silver Strand Chapter of Military Officers Association of America, and inspires the community by regularly running road races, often placing first in his age group. Williams runs Coronado streets daily, reminding us that

personal fitness is important at any age.

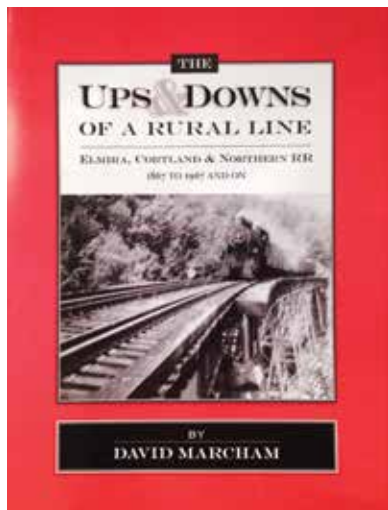




J. Chris Hausler's BOOK & MOVIE REVIEWS



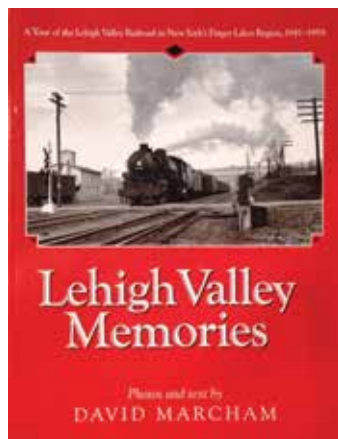
The book I'm reviewing is a look at the life and times of a rural railroad line. This line was once known as the Elmira, Cortland & Northern Railroad which became a branch of the Lehigh



Valley Railroad. The book is titled, *The Ups & Downs of a Rural Line* and was published in 2009. Its current ISBN is 978-0942690507. Located in central New York it existed in some form from 1867 to 1967 as the book's subtitle indicates. Although hard copies of the book can be

purchased, for some reason even though recently published, a.pdf of it can be downloaded for free from the Cornell University Library at: <https://ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/14138>.

The author, David Marcham and his brother John, became rail fans at an early age. John, who edited the book, moved on but Dave stuck with it first becoming a tower operator and agent-telegrapher for the Lehigh Valley while a student at Cornell University in the early 1950's. This despite the fact, as he related in his earlier book, *Lehigh Valley Memories* that he was incapable of reading his name in Morse Code. After a stint in the US Army, he then spent six years in the finance department of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway and while there became treasurer of the Washington & Old Dominion Railroad, a



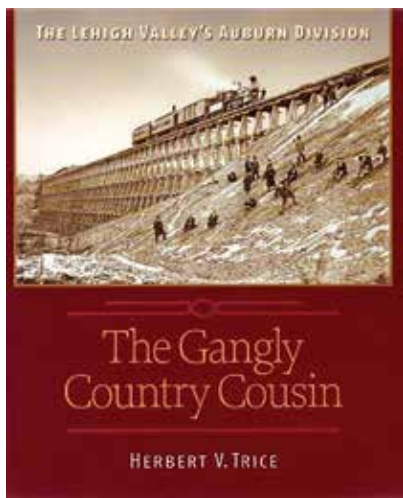
C&O subsidiary. He then went to work for the New York Central for a several years and ended up at the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority for 23 years working in various departments.

I like to think of this book as a loving look at "railroading in the weeds", my favorite kind, a look at branch line railroading back when branch lines provided the majority of local transportation for many citizens, particularly those in more rural environments. Although not a book about the telegraph, the telegraph, telegraphers and even telegraph related procedures are frequently mentioned. I suspect this is due to Dave's interest in and early position on the railroad. It was also the station agents, conductors, engineers and other personnel on these branches who accepted, recognized and even nurtured this young man's curiosity about railroading. These books were written, as Dave said in the earlier one, to return the favor, to document the lives and times of these individuals who had given him so much encouragement. Most of the personal memories are from the 1940's and 1950's but the book is a well researched look at the entire period of the line's existence.

In addition to the main writing there are a number of sidebar articles, some of which are excerpts from old news reports. There is one discussing an entire family of telegraph operators, father, sons and grandsons, one of the sons marrying a telegraph operator and raising more operators. But the EC&N is now gone, much of the ROW is overgrown or plowed under. Bits of it still exist. There's still some track in Cortland, NY and even part of the Cortland roundhouse remains although without track and not used for anything railroad. Several stations still exist as well, re-purposed for other things. The EC&N, its times and its people are now only memories, lovingly researched and brought back to life by Mr. Marcham.

Although his earlier book, again *Lehigh Valley*

Memories, is also a good read I haven't been able to find it available for free download. Its ISBN is 978-0942690408. But if you just can't get enough of branch line central NY Lehigh Valley railroading, there is another book on the subject written by another author also available for free download from the Cornell University Library. This book is titled, *The Gangly Country Cousin* by Herbert V. Trice which looks at the Auburn Division of the



Lehigh Valley. It was published in 2004 and its ISBN is 978-0942690484. You can download a .pdf of *The Gangly Country Cousin* from: ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/11631.

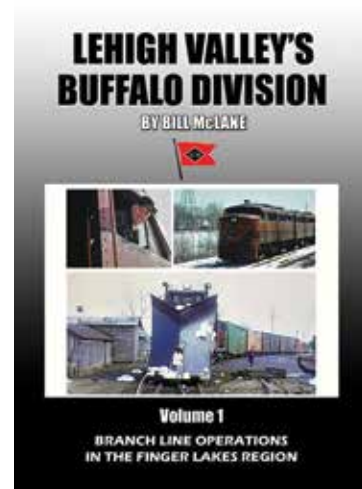
The Auburn Division encompassed both the EC&N as well

as the Auburn and several other Lehigh Valley branch lines in central NY. The Auburn and EC&N branches crossed at Freeville, NY and back in the spring 2013 issue of *Dots & Dashes* I reviewed a book developed from the recorded memoirs of Ken Rice, who was the agent-telegrapher at Freeville from 1945 up until 1974, a couple years before total abandonment of the line with the formation of Conrail.

Herb Trice, now deceased, was a very well known Lehigh Valley historian and even rode and

documented the last train on the northern section of the EC&N in his book. And if you still can't get enough, that last run as well as other runs on the Auburn Division were also documented on 8mm film by another passenger on that last run, Bill McLane, the local union chairman.

It is available as as one of the sequences on Volume 1, the first of a set of three DVD's titled, *Lehigh Valley's Buffalo Division*. It can be purchased at this link: www.johnpmedia.com/dvds/lehigh-valleys-buffalo-division-volume-1.



Although I never met Herb Trice face-to-face I communicated with him by mail. He was very helpful to me in my early studies about the Lehigh Valley and provided me with the material from which I was able to extract the telegraph calls for the entire railroad. I compiled and passed this information on to past MTC president Bill Dunbar, a collector of telegraph office calls, as he had not previously been able to acquire the Lehigh Valley calls. He published a document containing these calls a copy of which I have. Anyway, however you acquire any of these three books, or the video, if you have any interest in branch line railroading as it once was I think you will enjoy what you find in them.

Morse continued from page 14

paragraph item:

"The magnetic telegraph of Professor Morse was completed yesterday to the depot in Pratt Street near Light in its preliminary arrangement, the wires having been laid and everything ready for communication. The result of the conventions on Monday next in this city will be sent to Washington by this means, where it will be known long before it would be possible to convey the information to the extremities of our own city. Verily, this is 'wire-working' to some purpose."

By May 31, *The Sun* was crowing: "Prof. Morse's Telegraph has already, during the first week of its operations, been proved to be of the greatest public importance. Time and space has been completely annihilated."

A.S. Abell, founder of *The Sun* and no slouch when it came to embracing technology in news-gathering and production — he saw the commercial and financial usefulness of the Linotype machine, telephone and typewriter — was a friend and an early supporter of Morse.

Abell "aided and promoted the establishment of the telegraph in every way in his power, foreseeing how valuable an instrument for the advancement of civilization it was bound to be," reported the newspaper in a 1904 article.

In an ironic twist, Morse offered to sell his invention to the federal government for \$100,000, but the offer was politely declined on the basis that the telegraph was merely a toy and would never pay for itself.

HOUSE TRACK **Want Ad Section**

For Morse Telegraph Club Members

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: 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.rfandp.org. The price is only \$25.15 postage paid.

Hubert Jewell is now a Silent Key, but his interesting book is still available.

AVAILABLE: Vintage Canadian Morse code club patch www.ebay.com/itm/1949326228100.

AVAILABLE: The equipment is part of a very large collection gathered over 60 years. It was from a family member who has passed but was a very long time and well known MTC member. I have included three pictures of the hardware. I would like to sell it as a collection. There are several rare west coast as well as many early rare pieces. \$12,500. Dave Ball (408) 805-0065



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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.arnewsline.org
www.usrepeaters.com
www.qth.com
www.qrz.com

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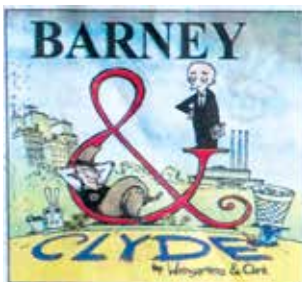
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