

*What**Hath**God**Wrought*

The Official Publication of the Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

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## THE CIVIL WAR FIELD TELEGRAPH

*By J. Chris Hausler*

You are probably all familiar with telegraph wire strung on poles with insulators, usually bare single strand No. 8 or No. 9 galvanized iron. What you may not be familiar with is the U. S. Military Telegraph's establishment of a field telegraph service during the Civil War. Although pole mounted solid iron wire was used wherever a more permanent installation was possible, when the army was on the move telegraph service was implemented with "field wire" run along the front between the corps to keep the various commanders in touch. This allowed them to better coordinate their efforts and be able to respond quickly to changing requirements. John Emmet O'Brien, a Civil War operator, in his 1910 book, "Telegraphing In Battle" reported that, "We used fine annealed (iron) wire of seven strands, covered with flexible rubber. A flat reel from which the wire was unwound, would be strapped to the back of a pack mule, the men following with slender pike poles, forked at the top to receive the wire. Frequently when woods and other timber was convenient, the wire would be slung up into a tree."



To energize this field wire, battery wagons were constructed as shown in the photo. William Rattle Plum, another Civil War operator, in his two volume 1882 book titled, "The Military Telegraph during the Civil War in the United States", described them as such: "Major Eckert, in contemplation of the spring campaign of the Army of the Potomac, constructed an apparatus for speedily paying out fine telegraph wire, which consisted of reels fitted to pack saddles borne by mules; each reel carrying one mile of wire. The construction party, organized, was under the immediate supervision of D. Doren, and all the field operators were subject to the orders of A. Harper Caldwell, chief operator at Meade's head-quarters. The electric current for charging the wires was supplied by a portable battery, consisting of sixteen sections, of six cells each. The cells were made of copper, about four inches in diameter, by nine in depth, and contained blue vitriol in solution. In the liquid was placed a leather cup, one-half of the diameter of the copper, containing a zinc plate and water. Each cell was insulated by a casing of thin sheet rubber, and fitted on the top was a bone-rubber cap, thus making the cells water-tight. Each section was enclosed in a strong box, and the whole securely packed in a common army wagon, which also carried a quantity of blue vitriol, the only article except water necessary to replenish the battery and keep it in working order. The operator's table, instruments, tools, battery, etc., were placed in one wagon, thus making a complete telegraphic outfit in one conveyance, sufficient for working any requisite number of lines at a moment's notice." Plum further describes field operation as follows:

*continued on page 5*

# Dots & Dashes

The official publication of

## The Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

Jim Wilson - Editor, *Dots & Dashes*

2742 Southern Hills Court • North Garden, VA 22959  
(434) 245-7041 • telegraphjim@gmail.com

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## MTC Board of Directors

**Jim Wades**  
International President  
jameswades@gmail.com  
(269) 650-0215

**Richard Williams**  
Int'l Secretary Treasurer  
runnerrichard@hotmail.com  
(619) 818-9017

**John Springer**  
Director  
sasjes@comcast.net  
(585) 334-4445

**J. Chris Hausler**  
Int'l Vice President  
jchausler@earthlink.net  
(585) 334-4445

**Jim Wilson**  
*Dots & Dashes* Editor  
telegraphjim@gmail.com  
(434) 245-7041

**Derek Cohn**  
Director  
vibroplex@mindspring.com

**Lavina Shaw**  
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(604) 942-2184

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Director (Canada)  
acebeckett@rogers.com  
(519) 637-2343



*If notifying MTC about a deceased member (Silent Key), please notify:*

**Jim Wilson**  
Editor, *Dots & Dashes*  
2742 Southern Hills Ct.  
North Garden, VA. 22959  
telegraphjim@gmail.com  
(434) 245-7041

*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:*

**James Wades**  
International President,  
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Buchanan, MI. 49107  
jameswades@gmail.com  
(269) 548-8219

**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.

## IN THIS ISSUE

### ARTICLES

- The Civil War Field Telegraph  
*By J. Chris Hausler* .....1,5-7
- Historic Railroad Stations are Featured  
on the Newly Issued U.S. Postage Stamps.....4
- 2022 Donors of \$25 or More..... 10
- Operating Mississippi River Railroad  
Swing Bridge in 1952  
*By Richad Behrens* ..... 11,13
- MTC Member Observes His  
Satellite Burn Up ..... 15
- If This Wire Could Talk  
*By John Springer* .....16-19

### IN EVERY ISSUE

- Sidewire .....3
- President's Line.....3-4
- Letters To The Editor .....8
- Welcome Aboard .....9
- Chapter News .....12-13
- Member Sample Biographies ..... 13
- Silent Keys.....14-15
- A Penny For Your Thoughts ..... 15
- Book & Movie Review .....20-21
- House Track .....22
- Do You Know?.....22

The next issue of *Dots & Dashes* is scheduled for publication on June 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

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Learn more about the history of the telegraph or simply enjoy using American Morse Code and authentic telegraph equipment.

[www.morsetelegraphclub.com](http://www.morsetelegraphclub.com)



## Sidewire

Comments from the  
Editor of *Dots & Dashes*

By Jim Wilson



### *Fourth Year of the Pandemic*

Since it began in December 2019, the COVID 19 coronavirus pandemic killed nearly seven million people worldwide. And the numbers continue to increase. The recent “tripledeemic” included COVID, the annual flu and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (RSV).

Our age group is particularly susceptible to all three of these respiratory diseases. So please continue to be extra careful. Many of the buildings where I go locally still require face masks. To be on the safe side, wearing face masks in public continues to be a good idea.

### *MTC Board Meeting*

The quarterly MTC board meeting was moderated on Zoom by MTC International President Jim Wades on March 9, 2023. This meeting was positive, humorous and informative. MTC International Secretary Treasurer Richard Williams reported generous donations during the past quarter totaling \$13,561 (including the anonymous donation of \$5,000). Thank you for your generosity, MTC members! A list of many of these donors is on page 10. Donations which arrived since that list was compiled are still welcomed.

During this Zoom meeting, former International MTC President, Lavina Shaw mentioned that on her birthday, March 29th, she would turn age 94. Before this Zoom meeting, Lavina had just spent half an hour on her treadmill plus finished a mile long walk. She continues to be a role model for us all. Go Lavina!

### *MTC Telegraph Demos*

Read Chapter News to see what some of our MTC chapters have planned for 2023. These chapter events may cause you to be inspired, to be active, and to be a recruiter for new MTC members. Join the fun!

*Jim Wilson*

## President's Line

Jim Wades, President  
Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.



### *A CW Renaissance?*

Your International President recently joined the “Long Island CW Club,” an organization that specializes in teaching International Morse to radio amateurs. While this presented the usual opportunity to present several talks on the history of telegraphy and the American Morse Code, it has also been a surprising journey of discovery because, apparently, “CW” is experiencing a bit of a renaissance in the Amateur Radio Service.

Over the past six months or so, I have had the opportunity to sit in on some of the many on-line forums conducted by LICW. The topics vary widely, but they are mostly centered on becoming a proficient CW operator. There’s a weekly “good fists club” session, a regular training course entitled “wild about bugs,” there are training classes for beginners designed to take someone from 0 to well above 30 words per minute, and so forth.

What is perhaps most interesting is that the class demographics aren’t limited to just the older generation. While people under 30 are scarce, there are many between 30 and 50 years old, which is actually an age group underrepresented in today’s aging Amateur Radio Service. There are also a fair number of younger women with a strong interest in CW.

The success of the LICW group, which conducts its activities Internationally via the Internet, is evidence of something that should be obvious, but which seems to be misunderstood by many: Telegraphy is an art form.

There is a difference between technology and art. Both evolve, but they evolve differently. Over time, technology tends to evolve away from the human element. Automation develops, the need for human intervention and maintenance diminishes, and in a sense, the technology itself becomes organic. It becomes just another tool or medium through which to accomplish another task or it recedes into the

*continued on next page* ➡

President's Line continued from previous page

background as an “application.” An art form, on the other hand, is defined by the human element. The human experience is central to art, and it must remain so. The growth and challenge of the art form define a journey which never quite reaches its end.

In today's Amateur Radio Service, one can set up a transceiver, interface it with a computer, and it can work contacts automatically. One's “ham radio shack” can do the operating for you while you are miles away. It is true that digital modes can be intriguing, but their novelty can wear off until using the computer interface seems little different than sending and receiving email or, worse yet, heating up yesterday's left-overs in a microwave oven. After all, the microwave oven is a very useful tool. It's actually an interesting technology, but using it is about as meaningful as watching a pot of water boil.

The art of telegraphy may rely on technology, old or new, but in doing so, the human being is at the center. He is faced with a continuous challenge

to become more proficient. Perhaps this is why those radio amateurs who become proficient in telegraphy often stick with it for a lifetime.

There is certainly nothing wrong with voice or digital communications, but one can't help but suspect that for many the novelty will wear off and ham radio will become less interesting, less inspiring. On the other hand, those LICW students are learning an art form that will continue to challenge them for a lifetime.

Both the commercial telegrapher and the radio amateur practice the art of telegraphy, even if different codes are used. Perhaps this is why American Morse Code has endured for so many years after it disappeared from commercial use. Perhaps this is why some of us still use it despite advancing age. Like our amateur radio brethren, telegraphy is an art, a unique human experience.

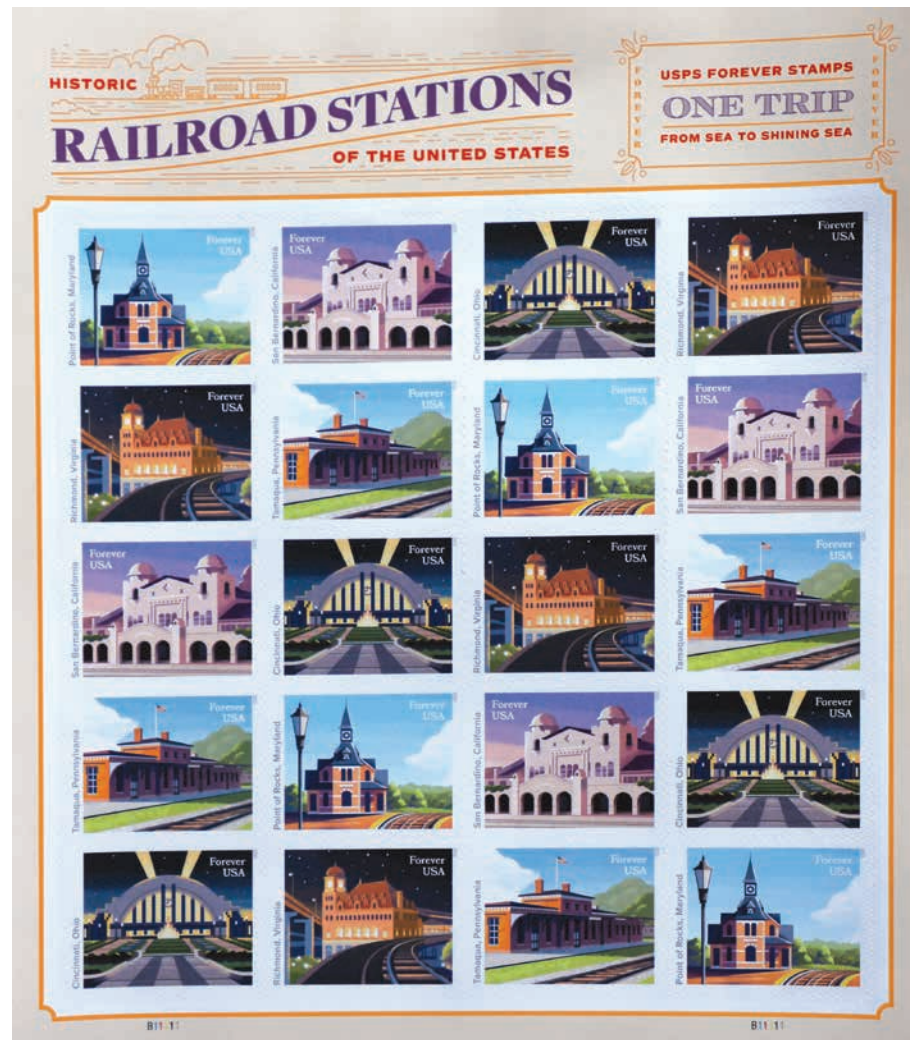
*Enjoy the journey!*

**73,  
Jim Wades**

## HISTORIC RAILROAD STATIONS ARE FEATURED ON THE NEWLY ISSUED U.S. POSTAGE STAMPS

The five historic railroad stations featured include: 1 Cincinnati, Ohio, 2 Tamaqua, Pennsylvania, 3 San Bernardino, California, 4 Richmond, Virginia, 5 Point of Rocks, Maryland.

You may want to stock up on these colorful postage stamps.





“It is designed to use the Caton or pocket, or field instrument; to use number fourteen wire for the field...”

The next photo shows a close up of the field telegraph office at Wilcox’s Landing on the James River during the Wilderness campaign. You can see the operator sitting on the ground with his portable relay combination set or KOB

placed on a desk made from a small wooden box, likely a “cracker” (hardtack) box. O’Brien, in his article also titled, “Telegraphing in Battle” in the September 1889 issue of the magazine, “The Century” wrote that sounders were not used at the front and that operators just listened to, “the gentle tick of the telegraph relay.”

I have not found a photo showing the use of a

Caton or other pocket set during the Civil War but O’Brien, both in his 1910 book and in his earlier article in “The Century”, included a number of drawings of various Civil War telegraph activities. Two of these, one titled, “General Grant and his Operator”, both showed a young operator at the end of a field wire using a pocket set. Note the bayonet ground connection. He also included one showing a pack mule stringing out wire.

I think the value and organization of the field telegraph was best expressed by



GENERAL GRANT AND HIS OPERATOR.

General Ulysses S. Grant in his memoirs when he said: “Nothing could be more complete than the organization and discipline of this body of brave and intelligent men. Insulated wires—insulated so that they would transmit messages in a storm, on the ground or under water—were wound upon reels, making about two hundred pounds weight of wire to each reel. Two men and one mule were detailed to each reel. The pack-saddle on which this was carried was provided with a rack like a sawbuck placed crosswise of the saddle, and raised above it so that the reel, with its wire, would revolve freely. There was a wagon, supplied with a telegraph operator, battery and telegraph instruments for each division, each corps, each army, and one for my headquarters. There were wagons also loaded with light poles, about the size and length of a wall tent pole, supplied with an iron spike in one end, used to hold the wires up when laid, so that wagons and artillery would not run over them. The mules thus loaded were assigned to brigades, and always kept with the command they were assigned to. The operators were also assigned to particular headquarters, and never changed except by special orders. The moment the troops were put in position to go into camp all the men connected with this branch of service would proceed to put up their wires. A mule loaded with a coil of wire would be led to the rear of the nearest flank of the brigade he belonged to, and would be led in a line parallel thereto, while one man would hold an end of the wire and uncoil it as the mule was led off. When he had walked the length of the wire the whole of it would be on the ground. This would be done in rear of every brigade at the same time. The ends of all the wires would then be joined, making a continuous wire in the rear of the whole army. The men, attached to brigades or divisions, would all commence at once raising the wires with their telegraph poles. This was done by making a loop in the wire and putting it over the spike and raising the pole to a perpendicular position. At intervals the wire would be attached to trees, or some other permanent object, so that one pole was sufficient at a place. In the absence of such a support two poles would have to be used, at intervals, placed at an angle so as to hold the wire firm in its place. While this was being done the telegraph wagons would take their positions near where the headquarters they belonged to were to be established, and would connect with the wire. Thus, in a few minutes longer time than it took a mule to walk the length

of its coil, telegraphic communication would be effected between all the headquarters of the army. No orders ever had to be given to establish the telegraph.”



About a dozen years ago, at the beginning of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War I decided, as best I could, to assemble a demonstration of a field wire office installation. As my guides I used a couple of drawings from O'Brien's publications which showed field wire, a pocket set and a bayonet ground as well as the image of the field telegraph office at Wilcox's Landing. With this, I constructed my own little field office as pictured. Not having a Caton pocket set or even a period correct Civil War era relay combination set, I used a more modern Bunnell box relay KOB. I also was unable



to secure any 14 gauge 7 strand annealed iron wire with rubber insulation so I had to settle for 14 gauge stranded copper wire, plastic insulated. I did, however, acquire a replica bayonet for an 1861 Springfield muzzle loading rifle to use as my ground. My ground return circuit, as short as it was, worked fine.

With reference to the bayonet ground, I came across a funny story reported in Plum involving Jesse H. Bunnell who, of course, later became a noted telegraph instrument manufacturer but who was just a young field telegraph operator during the Civil War. The story provides an apt description of the hazards faced by front line operators. This event occurred in late September 1863 during the run up to the battles in and around the Chattanooga area later that fall. The story goes as follows: "When the operators were driven from widow Glenn's, where they had rendered invaluable service, they opened an office on a stump at the entrance to Dry Valley. After the Union right was driven beyond the stump office, Captain VanDuzer, who, besides his telegraph duties, served Rosecrans as aide, directed (John) Holdridge to open an office on the Rossville road. He had just succeeded in cutting the wire for that purpose when a brigade of infantry formed in line of battle immediately in front, and opened fire on the advancing enemy; bullets were flying as numerous as hailstones in a cold storm. Bunnell called out for a ground wire and Holdridge cried, "Give me a ground wire; who's got a bayonet for a ground? I'll go find one," and off he started. A few moments later, the brigade gave way and John (Holdridge) was swept on to Rossville, whence he probably accompanied Rosecrans to Chattanooga. Two days after, Bunnell met him at the office door in Chattanooga and asked, 'Have you found that bayonet yet?'"

Finally we all know that telegraphers were a literate lot as after all one had to be able to read and write to get the job. One, a Z. P. Hotchkiss, recorded his experiences while working on the field telegraph in a poem which was reproduced in Plum. No title was given for the poem so I have chosen one that I think well fits, Enjoy!

## *Yankee Lightning*

*Spirit of ancient Morse, awaken!  
Too soon you'll slip the mortal coil.  
Half thy honor now is taken  
By those who former plans would spoil,*

*Now, through the camp O'Neal and staff  
Display the newly conceived rules  
For field work, and a telegraph  
Carried upon the backs of mules.*

*What! they, amid the cannon's rattle,  
The clang of strife, the flash of fire,  
Steal from 'neath the cloud of battle  
And chain the lightnings to a wire?*

*Yes! When foe with foe contending,  
Man against man and steel 'gainst steel,  
Then, from loaded mules, outsending  
An iron wire from off the "reel,"*

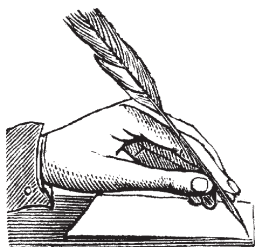
*To join this with other stations,  
By dreaded chains of Yankee wire,  
O'er which t'dart communications,  
Swiftly as Heaven's electric fire.*

*See, the work is now completed;  
Hark! 'T was the trembling magnet spoke:  
"Gen'ral! Here! the foe's retreated  
From 'neath our fire through yonder smoke.*

*"Quick, charge your caissoned batteries!  
Stand ready, boys, to fire the mine;  
Pause not for thankful flatteries,  
But charge – charge along the line!"*

*Dots, dashes, dots – the word's spoken  
From corps to corps, from post to post:  
"Hip, hip, hurrah! their line is broken;  
We have beaten the rebel host."*

*Along ours, the red fire pouring  
On center, rear – on front and flanks –  
Though they'd withstand the big guns roaring,  
Yankee lightning breaks their ranks.*



# Letters to the Editor

*January 7th*

Want to try this? <http://pin.it/sQ16ZWS> will take you to a highly simplified or otherwise dumbed down story about the development of a telegraph system by Samuel Morse. This story appeared in "Pinterest" on January 7, 2023. It is reasonably interesting for a reader who has no knowledge of a telegraph system and how it functions.

**Best Wishes,  
Bill Neil  
Conroe, Texas**

*January 11th*

The "secret message" in the latest issue of *Dots & Dashes* is "emphasize fun in your life." [Readers, the secret message in each issue is printed in Morse code at the top of each page.]

Our family continues to grow in numbers. I am very happy to report that the Harry Turner Memorial station W9YZE is on the air on 20 meters and 30 meters most days. So get on the air and give me a call!

**73,  
William Tischr,  
NOWM**

*January 16th*

This morning I was looking for material to run auto-text-transmit today on my "City Wire," for background music here in the digs. It may interest you, as it concerns early insulators and early pole line practices.

The attached is a bit of the material selected. It is from one of the 700+ page DOC files where all this text lives and waits to be chosen for running on the wire. We have close to 6,000,000 words of text edited and at-the-ready for running on our "City Wire." Right now, this stuff is pouring out of a model 15-B sounder (which is far from my favorite model of sounder. It just happens to be the one in the resonator.)

To you Brass Pounders, some of the spacings in the script may look a little generous, but realize that this stuff is edited to run and be clear at 40

to 45 words per minute, so the spacing has to be generous or things get jumbled up very quickly. Good spacing is the most important thing in sending, ya know...and better too much than not enough.

**Frank Scheer,  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Railway Mail Service Library Foundation**

*February 2nd*

Sunspot counts have hit a nine year high. This is a continued sign of strength for Solar Cycle 25. Thus, Cycle 25 may soon surpass Solar Cycle 24 for an unexpectedly strong Solar Maximum next year. This is good news for ham radio operators. Check [www.spaeweather.com](http://www.spaeweather.com).

**Friend of MTC,  
Larry Wilson  
Louisville, Ohio**

*March 5th*

I have updated the MTC membership page with the Canadian form and have added Kevin Saville's display to the MTC member activity page.

**73,  
Chip,  
N3IW**

*March 5th*

Kitt and I are home again after a nice vacation in Cabo San Lucas. It was very nice there with warm sunshine every day. Here is a photo from our balcony.

**Richard Williams,  
International MTC  
Secretary-Treasurer**

*March 7th*

Here is a link to a 20 minute 1958 National Film Board of Canada which will interest train enthusiasts: [www.nfb.ca/film/railroaders](http://www.nfb.ca/film/railroaders).

**Doug Hately**



March 9th

The column A Penny For Your Thoughts got us thinking. At the most recent meeting of the Maple Leaf "ON" Chapter, the subject of what happens to valuable telegraph equipment after a member passes was raised. A consistent issue arose: would it be possible to have an American and a Canadian prearranged agreement where members can forward their telegraph equipment before they become a Silent Key?

Some railway museums are long range and others are short range due to having to pay the

operating wage package selling off donated items.

As an example, a railway local signal maintainer saved and donated his railway telegraph equipment which was removed when the telegraph became obsolete. He donated this to the local rail museum and it was stored in a box car. Then the museum auctioned off this equipment to get money to pay museum wages. This was not the intention of the donor. An agreement would hopefully prevent this from happening in the future.

**Robert Weare**



# Welcome Aboard!

## NEW MEMBERS OF MTC

*Richard Inwood of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada*

*Gary Dutt of Olalla, WA*

*Dr. Barry Schreiber of Zimmerman, MN*

*Bryan Torres of Springfield, MA*

*Tom Waits of Hillsboro, WI*

*Jeff Waldrop of Westlake, LA*

*James Kreuzer of Grand Island, NY  
(rejoined after several years absent)*



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| Saville          | Kevin             |                   |                   |
| LaCombe          | Paul              | <b>Chapters</b>   |                   |
| Hooson           | Evan              | SA Chapter        | \$ 865.00         |
| Borleske         | Mark              | TD Chapter        | \$ 500.00         |
| Collings         | Steve L           | FX Chapter        | \$ 150.00         |
| Eckes            | Ed                | WG Chapter        | \$ 100.00         |
| Hudd             | Gloria            | WA Chapter        | \$ 180.00         |
| Reh-WA2AUY       | Vincent           |                   |                   |

### *Grand Total Donations*

# \$13,562

# OPERATING MISSISSIPPI RIVER RAILROAD SWING BRIDGE IN 1952

*By Richard Behrens, Former Secretary-Treasurer of the CD Combs MTC Chapter*

For background, I was born in 1931 in Green Island, Iowa. After graduating from Preston high school in 1949, I went to work for the Milwaukee Railroad in eastern Iowa. My uncle, August Clausen, a long time employee of the Milwaukee, had arranged this job for me. After serving about 3-4 months as an apprentice at Delmar for 40 cents an hour, I worked on the extra board at Elwood, Lost Nation, Oxford Jct, Martelle and Green Island. Then, I took the temporary second trick job at the interlocking tower at Green Island.

In February 1952, I took the second trick job there on the Mississippi River railroad swing bridge between Sabula, Iowa and Savanna, Illinois. The bridge operators their worked with three dispatchers at Marion, Dubuque and Savanna. The train orders were received from the dispatchers via telegraph or telephone. To give train orders to the engineer and conductor, the bridge operator didn't have to stand near the track to give the orders with a forked pole as there was a train order stand near the bridge cabin to hold the orders. This was welcomed by both trainman and operators, when compared to giving orders by hand.

At that time when closing the bridge, after letting a barge thru, most operators had to walk from the operator's cabin in the middle of the bridge to the west end of the bridge, then climb down a ladder and step to a small platform under the rails, which was just over the river, to visibly make sure a huge cast iron or steel pin with a round bottom had dropped a short distance into a slot before the rails were forced all the way down to close the bridge. If the bridge was swung too fast the round bottom pin would skip over the slot. This was a scary task any time but more so if it was dark outside, raining, snowing, or windy. I still vividly remember doing this in bad weather. During 1952, the river was also very high. The included bridge photos, were taken in 2011. As far as I know, no operators ever fell in the river even though the bridge was first built in about 1880 and later improvements were made to it until 1906, including converting from iron to steel.

Later in October of 1952, I was drafted into the army and after two years, mostly overseas, returned to the bridge job. By then, an electric eye had been installed to verify the rail alignment, so the trip to visually check the initial drop of the huge pin was not needed. This was a relief for the

*continued at the bottom of page 13* ➡



# CHAPTER NEWS

## *Calgary “CG” Chapter*

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The Calgary CG Chapter has entered a new year on a good footing, thanks to the dedicated stewardship of former International MTC President, Lavina Shaw, who served as the chapter Secretary-Treasurer for numerous years. The resurrected chapter now has 32 members, including six newly added last year. By the way, it takes three of us, Ken Ashmead, Paul Mercer, and Marilyn Maguire, to replace Lavina!

Generous donations of printed and recorded materials from Lavina last year have been followed this year by donations of railway and telegraphy publications, dozens of train orders and many pole line insulators from members of the public.

The Calgary Chapter has many things to look forward to during 2023.

On March 13th members made a presentation to the First Canadian Collectors Club. This presentation, titled “Morse Telegraphy and What It Means to Canadian Collectors,” began with a brief history of Morse telegraphy and its use in Canada. Then we delved into how the increasing scarcity of once common hardware and paperwork makes collecting it fun – and profitable! MTC members have identified shopping list of items that we ask collectors to be on the lookout for.

On April 15 & 16th members will be hosting a booth at Supertrain 2023 in Calgary, Alberta. Supertrain is Canada’s largest model train show, continuing an annual train show stretching back decades. The show space exceeds 40,000 square feet and is expected to attract over 10,000 visitors.

The Calgary Chapter will be the focal point of four station live telegraph circuits, a first for Supertrain. Other points on the line include two Alberta-based museums and a museum from British Columbia. We will use the circuit to demonstrate the art and science of Morse code, the invention that changed the world, and how it became central to time table and train order operation on Canada’s railways for more than 100 years. We will also talk about how Morse code supported public communication through the use of telegrams. We will have on display some of the hardware and paperwork that was once common to virtually every train station in Canada and we’ll have a hands-on telegraph display for those who

want to try their hand as “slinging lightning.”

On May 20th Calgary’s Heritage Park opens for the season. The Park, established in 1964 to preserve and promote Western Canadian history, has four former Canadian Pacific Railway stations on the property, three of which are wired into the Morse telegraph circuit. Members of the chapter will again staff the stations and demonstrate American Morse telegraphy and the life of a train station agent operator, twice per week as we did last season.

On September 9 & 10th Heritage Park will host Railway Days. This has been an annual event since 1987 and it exists to showcase the parks extensive collection of railway buildings, artifacts and rolling stock. Landline telegraphy, as it was used on Canada’s railways, has been featured most years since that time. This year, members of the Calgary “CG” and Edmonton “MO” chapters will again sling some lightning to wow visitors at the park.

Perhaps the most exciting plan is the Calgary Chapter’s initiated project, named “The Alberta MTC Line,” to bring active landline telegraphy back to Alberta and Western Canada. The project will examine the feasibility and technical hurdles, to getting Alberta based museums that have Morse telegraph equipment in their displays to join a working multi-station telegraph network. This is an exciting and challenging project to be sure. We will have more updates as we get rolling.

***Onward and upward, we go!***

**73,**

***Ken Ashmead, President***


***Paul Mercer, Vice-President***

***Marilyn Maguire, Secretary-Treasurer***

## *Evergreen “SX” Chapter*

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“The Great Train Show” in the Puyallup Fairgrounds Showplex was held on January 12-21. This included a joint telegraph, Tacoma Chapter NRHS, and Operation Lifesaver exhibit. The show was open 10AM to 4PM. Admission was \$15 on Saturday and \$11 on Sunday.

On April 22nd at 11AM the spring chapter meeting will be conducted. Ideally, this will be in person at the Foss Waterway Seaport Museum and by zoom. Chapter meetings are usually timed for 

Morse Day, which is Thursday April 27th. Expect pizza and an interesting presentation.

**73,  
Kevin Saville,  
President**

*Washington-Baltimore "WA" Chapter*

Several upcoming events are scheduled for the WA Chapter. These include Morse Day on April 27th at the Postal Railroad Museum in Boyce, Virginia and Civil War Camp Day in June at Fort

Ward Park in Alexandria, Virginia. And a unique new event, a tour of the nuclear powered merchant ship, The Savannah, will include a telegraph demo. This event is scheduled for mid-May. A GPS location for this event is 4601 Newgate Avenue, pier 13.

*Our thoughts and prayers go out to Valerie and the family of newly appointed WA chapter president Walt Mathers.*

*Unfortunately, on March 17th, Walt became a Silent Key*

## MEMBERS SAMPLE BIOGRAPHIES

*Here are sample biographies of some of our new MTC members and of loyal continuing members. You will appreciate this new column about our Morse Telegraph Club members.*

### **JAMES KREUZER**

My job in Grand Island, NY as a rare book dealer and as assistant curator for the Antique Wireless Association (AWA) Museum is more than interesting. My amateur radio call sign is N2GHD.

### **ROBERT BETTS**

While serving in the U.S. Army air defense, I was a communications specialist. Also, I have a great collection of telegraph keys. And I am author of the book: The Code Book, Morse code instruction manual. My amateur radio call sign here in Shelton, CT is N1KPR.

### **PAUL GUNZENHAUSER**

Here in Humeston, IA, I serve as director of our depot museum, which is called "Union Depot." Originally, this depot served two railroads. We feature the last wooden railroad water tower in Iowa!

*Operating Mississippi River Railroad Swing Bridge continued from page 11*

operators. I understand this bridge is currently being used by the Canadian Pacific railroad, having purchased the former IC&E and DM&E lines in 2008. However, not as many trains cross the bridge as in 1952, I understand barge traffic is still about the same. River traffic has always had right of way over trains, since the river traffic was there long before trains needed a river crossing.

Later, since I was low on the seniority list for day time work and various other reasons, I used

### **NORMAN SEGLEM**

In 1957, I learned telegraphy at the Gale Institute in Minneapolis. That year I graduated from high school and began a job with the Great Northern Railroad. Forty-three years later I retired from the Great Northern. Some ride!

### **DURELL M. ROTH**

Here in Austin, TX my 18 year old grandson says he wants to learn the code and get on the Morse Telegraph wire. He also wants to earn his amateur radio license and get on the air. Morse lives!

### **BARRY SCHREIBER**

Here in Zimmerman, MN, I am a new member of MTC. A working telegraph line has been established between Princeton Great Northern railway station (home of the Mille Lacs County Historical Society) and the nearby Long's Siding G.N. depot.

the G I Bill to further my education obtaining a BS degree in hydro engineering from the U of Iowa in 1960, then worked for the Corps of Engineers until I retired in 1989 in Omaha. NE.

*PS. On the wall behind my computer is an artist drawing of the former Green Island depot. On my computer screen is a photo of the Sabula Bridge. They have always been of great value to me.*

# “30” SILENT KEYS

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



## FLORIDA “FX” CHAPTER

**J. WARREN MCFARLAND** closed the key on Christmas day, December 25, 2022. Warren was 99. Son of a telegrapher, Warren took a job with the Atlantic Coast Line in Florida. Then during WW2, Warren served as a radioman aboard PBM sub hunters in the Atlantic. Upon victory in Europe, he continued service in the Pacific. Warren often commented that although they never located any submarines, they did rescue a number of downed flyers.

Following his military service, Warren returned to the ACL, eventually becoming a dispatcher, which included the dark territory north of Ocala. Upon retirement from the ACL, Warren accepted a position with the ICC as an inspector for railroad complicity of rules and procedures.

Warren was the heart of the Florida Chapter for many years, participating in reoccurring demonstrations throughout central Florida, teaching kids how to send their names in American Morse, and serving as the Chapter’s Web Master. He was an inspiration to many of our Chapter members. When doing demonstrations, he never lacked for help from other Chapter members. It was such a pleasure to learn from and work with him.

If there is a telegraph in Heaven, we are certain that Warren will be at the key, on first shift, keeping everything running safely and on time.

***Thanks to Don Andrus for this information on Warren’s railroad career and for his added comments.***

*MTC member Frank Scheer also adds: The Venerable Warren McFarland (sined “M”) was hired on in 1941 as a telegrapher on the Ocala Division of the Atlantic Coast Line RR. Warren was in his upper 90’s and his mind was sharp as a tack as of our last correspondence last year. I had the privilege of working with Warren on the Wire several years ago. His “fist” was solid. It is thanks to Warren that we have an eleven-page script simulating the second trick Ocala Division Morse Train Wire, circa 1950. Rest in peace, Brother Warren.*

## C.D. COMBS “FN” CHAPTER

**MORRIS C. McMANUS** of Barstow, CA passed away on February 11, 2023. He was born on February 10th many years earlier, the day before his death.

Mabel McManus, wife of Morris, comments, “He remembered all of his years as a telegrapher. I believe they were his most memorable.”

***Thanks to Mabel McManus for these comments. Morris and Mabel were happily married for 70 years.***

## Maple Leaf “ON” Chapter

**RUSS A. NICHOLS**, age 95, of Huntsville, Ontario, Canada just left this life in early 2023.

**ROBERT WEARE** of the Maple Leaf Chapter comments: I had the pleasure of meeting Russ at the St. Thomas Ontario Canada Pinafore Park Narrow Gauge (42 inch) Railway as Russ and others from Huntsville were attempting to write the book, *Rebirth of the Portage Flyer* (ISBN 0-9737154-0-5 published by Walker Lake Productions at 1075 Walker Road East, RR#4 Huntsville Ontario, Canada P1H 2J6.)

This was a long journey for Russ and others of Huntsville. This book would assist in their journey explaining how Russ was the go-to guy until they reached success at Huntsville. As stated, my initial meeting with Russ was at the Pinafore Park Railway. Russ took the time to explain how the Huntsville group was attempting to return the their railway back home.

Russ had a successful purchase from the PPR owner, Don Broadbear (who passed February 21, 2023) with the sale of Don’s two 42-inch steam engines (the remaining equipment would be purchased, restored, and trucked back home) for the *Rebirth*. This venture was not cut and dried as they first located at the municipal (closed) dump. Then they moved it to the present location at Huntsville proper with their shop and train stations.

Oh, and did I mention the work at the Oxtongue River Venture with local volunteers and donated earth equipment till the local cottage association derailed the project? There is a charm. The group then made an agreement with the Friends of Muskoka Pioneer Village to build and operate from a new station, with Russ organizing a working telegraph circuit between this new station with the valuable assistance from the local Rotary Club as their landlord -- who spiked their rent and built a second story on the planned station.

A second station at the lines end used the Fairy Station for receiving telegrams sent from the Rotary station. This was first class project. Russ and his family are proud. Also, as a side note, Russ and others restored the local Huntsville railway station while assisting tourism.

From the success of the Portage Flyer, if other local station restoration projects and at other locations, you would be blessed to have the assistance of the local Rotary Club. They were successful at raising \$75,000 in two months.

Today, all of the equipment and track has been installed and restored for future generations to enjoy – thanks to the vision of Russ and his friends. Russ Nichols was a wise and kind man who we were privileged to cross paths with. If only there were more Russ Nicholls!

#### CALGARY “CG” CHAPTER

**BRUCE H. EDWARDS** passed away recently. His son promises to send more details soon. If they don't make it in this Spring issue, look for the details in the Summer issue.

#### WASHINGTON “WA” CHAPTER

**WALT FRANK MATHERS**, age 73, of Glen Burnie, Maryland, left this world on March 17, 2023. He was born on June 27, 1949. Walt had recently taken on the role of WA Chapter President. He was enthusiastic and energetic with new ideas about where to show the public the magic of the telegraph. But an unexpected illness took Walt away fairly quickly. For several years, Walt's wife, Valerie, has run an ad on page 22 for hand crafted authentic Civil War attire.

Walt retired from the CSX Railroad and kept busy with a signaling and Civil War era music groups. He was active with the Washington-Baltimore Chapter for the past two or more decades. Walt took me places like the Gettysburg battlefield three-day event where I woke up with the whining of horses and the smell of campfires cooking bacon. This was living history. Walt expanded my life experiences.

Strong Christian faith guided Walt and Valerie during his lifetime.

*Rest in Peace,  
Brother Walt*

## BREAKING NEWS

*Lavina Shaw became a Silent Key on March 30th. Details will follow in the next issue*

# MTC MEMBER OBSERVES HIS SATELLITE BURN UP

As planned, the Earth Radiation Budget Satellite burned up on January 8, 2023. MTC member John Green, KX4P, was the designer for the wiring layout. Until its demise was announced by NASA, John had forgotten his role in designing and building this valuable satellite. ERBS was launched on October 5, 1984.

“It was a very successful satellite,” explains John. “I had to know every instrument” he adds. “This stuff wasn't gonna work if my stuff didn't,” John stated.

[You can search Wikipedia for a photograph of this bus sized satellite and for a description of its many functions.]

ERBS was a NASA scientific research satellite. It was launched from the cargo bay of Space Shuttle Challenger (STS-41-G) from the Kennedy Space Center.

At first, one of the solar panels on ERBS failed to open. Astronaut Sally Ride had to shake the satellite with the remotely-controlled robotic arm. This did the trick, placing the stuck panel into the sunlight.

While ERBS had a design life of only two years, it lasted 21 years, gathering valuable scientific data. Taxpayers got more than their money's worth!

Among the valuable data collected by ERBS, was measurement of the decline in the ozone layer over Antarctica. This data was key in the international community's decision making process in 1987, resulting in a near elimination of CFC's in industrialized countries. This satellite also measured the impact of volcanic aerosols on global climate.

# IF THIS WIRE COULD TALK

*By John Springer*

Each year for 35 years, I go to Montana to fly fish for trout. Known as the Big Sky Country, it truly is the last best place for such fishing. At this point, you're possibly wondering why you're reading a fishing story in a railroad publication and I'll tell you why. About three years ago, I saw a picture of an old interlocking tower located in Guilford, Connecticut and in studying this picture I noticed a wind-up clock and oil lamps. In a photo taken in the 1970's one can see that the board is black paper and at this time electric lights have been added to it like all the towers I've previously visited. So, the old picture I saw was before electricity was added to the tower.

Back about 1959 or so, my parents were in a car accident and my mother got hurt badly. They had just built our home and my dad had no money for a baby sitter or family nearby so he took me to the tower each day and I sat there for 8 hours. When things got back to normal, and because he



*Inside Guilford Tower and the tower back in the 70's*

had Tuesday and Wednesday off, he would take me with him each Saturday because I enjoyed going with him very much and it became our time together. That became our day together until I hired out in engine service in May of 1970.

In all those years and even after hiring out and working 42 years, I had not given any thought to how the trains ran before electricity and phone lines. It became a real eye opener for me. When information was passed to me from my friend Jon Chase about all the towers along the New Haven Railroad from NY to Boston, I wanted to know more about Morse code as the method of communication on the railroad. Through my quest for knowledge about American Morse on the railroad, I came to know Chris Hausler and a small group of others that helped me learn and understand a great deal about this subject. After several years of friendship, Chris still helps me and this is how some of the information for this story came to me.

Back to fishing the Missouri River. For many years there was a place I would walk into from the old Great Northern track and I noticed wire lying along the track. Fishermen are used to seeing wire out west because it's how the ranchers keep their cattle in one area. I always thought that what I was looking at was wire for electric fences. With electricity going through it if the cow touches it, it gets a shock and backs off. But, as time went on







and I learned more and saw pictures of the wire used for the telegraph, I realized what I had been looking at all these years.

This summer 2022 I fished in an area I had not been to and while looking at some nice trout feeding, I saw that coil of wire you see in a picture. I had no idea how long it's been laying on the ground all coiled up but I started thinking about it and with Chris's help from a list of calls that a past President of the MTC had given him, I can tell you that train orders, the OS'ing of trains, receipt and transmittal of telegrams, and from what I have read in some books, the baseball scores during the World Series were transmitted by telegraph on this roll of coiled wire. Any members of the Morse Code Telegraph Club reading this know far more than I do about the wire because I'm still learning about the telegraph systems of individual railroads.



To anyone else you can learn a bit of history along with me on how the telegraph was used to expedite the movement of trains and some other uses. Of course, while fly fishing you spend time waiting for fish to eat and then try to figure out what fly to use to catch them. As I did that and looking at the track as well as seeing that coil of wire, I was certain that I could I hear the train



*The engineer of 235 would have seen my friend Jeff catching another fish as he went by us.*

dispatcher giving instructions as well as answering the Operators at Craig, Wolf Creek and Silver when they would give their OS and reporting train 235 by them on time. All while I was searching for feeding trout. Then I heard the dispatcher



*Cascade Yard the station would have been to the left side of the Picture*

issue the train orders for train 673 a third class Local Frt. out of Great Falls. He was calling the operator's at Ulm (M): DS M DS M . . . M DS Q DS Q (Q is Cascade, with a large yard at the station) Q DS . . . DS copy 3 (this would be a 19 order make 3 copies) the order might look like this:

Order #5 to C&E (Conductor & Engineer) Eng (Engine) 529  
Eng 529 run extra Ulm to Cascade.



Then the operator at M would tap out this order for the dispatcher to hear. And, if repeated correctly, the train dispatcher would issue “Com” (Complete) and the time at that moment which the operator at M would handwrite in the spaces provided at the bottom of the train order form. If additional train orders were necessary to protect Extra 529 west against any east bound



movements coming out of Q, the train dispatcher would instruct the operator at Q to copy seven and the operator at M to copy three, issuing the order first to Q as a restricting order at Q to “C&E Westbound Trains” and to the operator at M to “C&E Extra 529 West” as a “helping order”. The operator at Q would repeat the order first and the train dispatcher would give a complete time and upon completion of issuance of any other orders for the Extra GN 529 West, the train dispatcher would then issue a clearance card for Extra GN 529 west, listing all train orders (movement and track orders) in effect for the train.

Train order signals at both stations would be displaying STOP prior to initiation of transmittal of train orders by the train dispatcher. Because Ulm would be the initial station for Extra 529 West, that train would likely receive its train orders and clearance at the train order office and enter the main track at the leaving switch of the siding at that station because the train order, as issued, does not entitle the train to occupy main track at Ulm. Upon departure of the markers of Extra GN 529 West from Ulm, the operator would “OS” (report the departure) of the train to DS At that point he would have come back and gotten on the wire M DS M DS... DS M... Extra 529 West and give the time he departed.

Upon arrival of Extra 529 West at Cascade, the train would not have any authority to the main track at the station and would have to enter the station siding or yard track at the first track

switch. Once the markers on the caboose have vacated the main track and the leaving switch is restored to the main track and locked, the operator at Cascade can “OS” (report) the arrival of Extra 529 West to the train dispatcher, getting on the wire and tapping out OS Q OS Q ..... And he would have heard his sounder click out DS Q.... and Q would tap out Extra 529 West arrived at Q at 1050 am. And the wire would go quiet again.

While the wire is quiet, I managed to fool a nice fish with one of my flies! This was not in my imagination!

Train 673 had much work to do in Cascade yard as there still stand today tall grain silos for feed for the local ranchers. Upon completing their work x 673 would be fixed up with his orders to run from Cascade to Wolf Creek where he would go in the clear as shown in the employee timetable #19 in effect at that time.

Soon the operator at Silver got on the wire RN DS RN DS..... DS RN..... And RN would say train 238 Out of Helena OT should we fix him up..... and you might hear DS WC DS WC (Wolf Creek) DS WC DS DS copy 3 and the operator at RN and WC would have their train order pad with double-sided carbon paper ready and again an order was sent over this wire in front of me while I stand in the Missouri River Order # 6 to C&E Eng 2019 run extra Silver to Wolf Creek and meet #673 Eng 529 #673 take siding. (This is a Timetable meet in Employee Time Table #19 in Effect in 1913). And again these 2 Telegraphers would do a repeat and if it was repeated exactly as given only then the DS would give a complete time and his initials. The operator at RN would put his semaphore signal to clear and hoop up the order as the train came into their station. At Silver the engineer might climb down from the engine and speak to the conductor and have an understanding of what will happen at Wolf Creek. Upon the arrival of 238 at Wolf Creek at 1221 PM the operator would get on is key WC DS WC DS..... DS WC 238 departed 1221 ready to copy order for X673 the dispatcher would call DS RN DS RN RN DS he would then say Copy 3 and then tap out the order for 673 to continue west from Wolf Creek to Silver.

This happened thousands of times over that coil of wire you see in my picture. The coil of wire became surplus around 1920's with the increasing installation of voice telephone train dispatching systems on railroads throughout the Nation. However, for economic reasons, many US and

Canadian carriers maintained Morse telegraph systems into the late 1960's on branch lines and lesser-used main track operations. Even into the mid-1980's, many Mexican carriers maintain Morse telegraph systems on major main track networks.

I want to thank my first student engineer on Amtrak Chris Gorick who gave me the title of this story. Chris Hausler, Don Riser, and Martin Le Roy for helping me so much to understand so much

about Morse Code. And Bill Neill a retired Train Dispatcher as well as former Rules Examiner for becoming my friend and checking my dictation of those train orders that I could hear while standing in a river and fly fishing in a beautiful place.

Note, so you know, I am not a writer just a story teller who has had an amazing life because of my parents and my wonderful wife Sandy who has always given me encouragement with anything I do.



# A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

*Recall that the new column, "A Penny for Your Thoughts," began its debut in the Spring 2022 issue of Dots & Dashes. This new column is intended to be a safe place for you to air your thoughts.*

***Previous items that were on your minds included:***

- *The unprovoked war by Russia against Ukraine*
- *Current inflation in the price of everything*
- *Our global climate disaster*
- *Issues of growing older*
- *The perceived decline in democracy*
- *The worldwide rise in crime*
- *Issues of declining sex in long time marriages*
- *Fear and likelihood of global nuclear war*

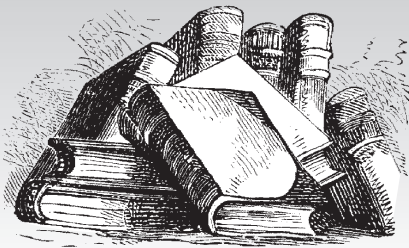
**F**or this issue we will add: 1) the massive invasion of the U.S., Canada, and Europe, plus 2) the fear of pending death.

During the past two years, millions of immigrants flooded in from South America to the United States, Canada, and Europe. These folks came in search for better economic opportunities and some came to escape gangs and wars. Future

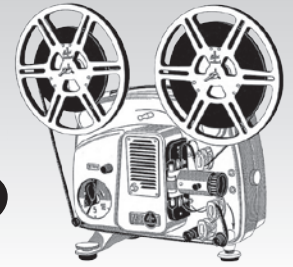
"climate migrants" may add nearly a billion more people fleeing from flooded coastal villages and low-lying areas. This invasion cannot be stopped and will significantly change the world order.

Death seems to be on your minds. Yes, death is inevitable, but for most of us death is unwelcomed. Do you believe there an afterlife? Religious leaders say yes. Many scientists say no. My advice is to live each day as a role model to your loved ones, have a legal will in place, and cross your fingers! So far, nobody has returned from death to tell us what might lie ahead.

So, live each day with dignity and hope that after you are gone, friends and family will say: He or she was a wonderful person. Remember, death is the great equalizer; rich or poor, you are going to die. Count your blessings and appreciate your families and friends. Perhaps folks on other planets can give us insights about death – whenever we make contact with them.



# J. Chris Hausler's BOOK & MOVIE REVIEWS



For this column I'm reviewing a recently released book by H. Roger Grant titled, *The Station Agent and the American Railroad Experience*. It is published by Indiana University Press and its ISBN is 978-0253064349. This is not the first book by Mr. Grant I've reviewed in this column. All the others have proved worth the read and this one is no exception. Mr. Grant has studied and written widely on American railroads. He points out in his introduction that although railroad subjects have been broadly addressed by many authors, the station agent, his life, his duties, his family's life, and many other matters once common among such workers have generally been overlooked and ignored. This book sets out to correct that omission. I should mention before I begin that when I heard that Mr. Grant was working on this book I reached out to him to offer any assistance I could. I don't recall providing him anything really useful but he did include my name in the "Acknowledgments" section of the book.

The book points out that by the beginning of the 21st Century the occupation of railroad station agent and operator had largely vanished. However, with the initial development of the railroads starting in the 1830's this then new occupation had to first be defined and developed. The book

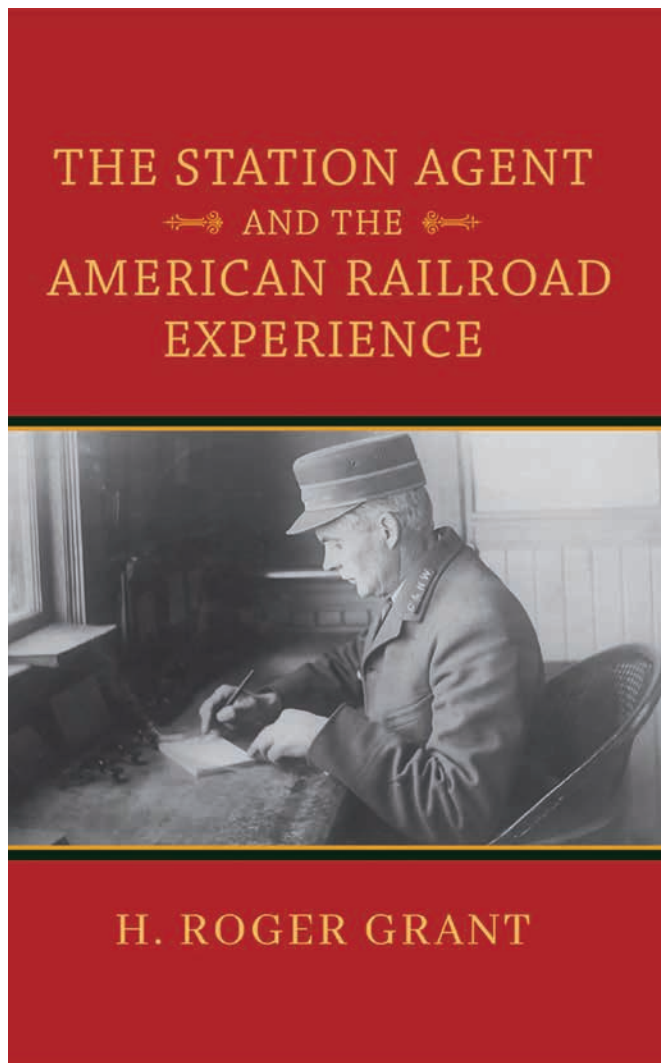
examines the entire arc of this vocation from beginning to end in four chapters, "Formative Years", "Maturity: Essentials", "Maturity: Complexities" and "Decline".

"Formative Years" analyzes how railroads began to understand the need for such agents and stations, or more properly, depots.

Originally railroads frequently just used areas within existing businesses such as hotels near the track and hired people who were already familiar with dealing with the public and public transportation such as those employed by hotels, riverboats, canals and stage coach lines. As railroads got their start before the telegraph was developed, the time interval system was initially used for train control. These approaches did work early on when distances were short, traffic and freight was light and speeds were slow. As business picked up however, they were no longer adequate and with the arrival of the telegraph railroads began, sometimes

reluctantly, to see the benefits of employing it. The increase in business, both freight and passenger, also began to demand purpose built structures, depots, to support the growing volumes.

The core of the book is two chapters both titled, "Maturity", the first one subtitled "Essentials" and the second, "Complexities". The "Essentials"



chapter describes the duties, both typical and sometimes unusual, which were required of station agents once the job became more or less standard and formalized. It also explains how agents were hired and trained to be able to handle these responsibilities. The workplace that the depot environment provided for the agent/operator, both good and not so good, is examined. Of course the telegraph eventually came to the forefront for train control as well as for the handling of much of the railroad's business communications and thus became an important and critical part of the agent/operator's job.

As the agent was the railroad's primary representative to a community, he or she became responsible for developing and maintaining local business for the railroad. Due to these efforts the agent tended to become well known in a community and involved in many of its activities. Those who did the job well were highly respected in their communities. And of course due to the telegraph, they also were a primary source of information and connection to happenings outside of that community.

The "Complexities" chapter explores aspects of the job, both those not necessarily directly associated with the day to day activities of the railroad as well as those impacting the life of the agent/operators in general. Side businesses are examined. I was completely unaware that the sale of sewing thread was apparently a not uncommon side business for an agent. And of course we are all aware of Richard Sears and the development of his "side" business.

The job also came with many annoyances, rowdy passengers and station loafers, poorly insulated depots which let in the cold even with a hot stove, and even dangers. Robberies were not uncommon and although the job itself was not considered dangerous, let's face it, the railroad can be a dangerous workplace. Finding decent housing and food could also be an issue in some locales. Having to essentially work for the railroad, the telegraph company, the express company and maybe others, resulted in having many bosses each with their own and frequently differing agendas and priorities. The job could thus be quite stressful and complaints of overwork were not uncommon.

This chapter addresses other "complexities" as well. The "extra" or "spare" board required new operators to be highly mobile and some chose to continue this "boomer" lifestyle. Several cases of

romance over the wires, both true and fictional, are discussed. The development of labor unions by fits and starts and the eventual evolution of the Order of Railway Telegraphers starting in 1886 is described. Finally, as the majority of agent/operators were male, the lives of their wives are examined.

The "Decline" chapter essentially starts after W.W.II with what the book calls "Indian Summer", a brief period of time when thanks to the growth of business during W.W. II, the future looked rosy both for the railroads and for the job of agent/telegrapher. But it was a chimera. W.W. II also brought air transportation to the forefront and the profitability that the railroads experienced due to the war also impacted the rest of industry. This led to better paying jobs for many which allowed more people to afford automobiles just at a time when two lane dirt roads were being paved and already paved two lane roads were being expanded to four lanes and even limited access expressways. These improved roads, government subsidized, also gave trucks an economic advantage and the ability to provide door-to-door service, something the railroads couldn't easily match.

Indian summer with its apparent profitability also brought about railroad mergers which led to the abandonment of duplicate routes and of course the agencies and agents serving them. We all know that the replacement of the labor intensive steam engines with diesel electrics led to major reductions in maintenance staff as well. Finally, expanding electric signaling and centralized traffic control systems reduced the need for train order operators.

In 1949 Western Union ended its agreement with the railroads to maintain their wayside line wires leaving them to the railroads and some railroads decided that it was time to employ a more modern technology. Although this wasn't the end of the telegraph on the railroad it was certainly the beginning of the end and the subsequent end of the need for skilled telegraph operators as agents. Although objected to by the ORT, railroads also began to centralize their agency services which led to a further reduction of agent/operator jobs. The writing was on the wall.

This book examines these issues and many others in much more detail than I have mentioned above. I found the book quite engrossing and think many of you will as well. Enjoy!

# 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](mailto: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](http://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](http://www.ebay.com/itm/1949326228100).

**AVAILABLE:** I have a few switches for sale. These were pulled from telephone test sets model 35-F. The 35-F test set can be viewed on line. The switches have the look of a telegraph key, complete with gap adjustment, shorting lever and adjustable return spring. This is just the ticket for someone putting together a Phrase radio. I have used these guys on the air. The knobs are numbered 1 thru 4, your choice while they last. Make that only one per customer, please.

The price is \$10 plus shipping, which usually runs about \$5. Call for availability 574 607-5441.

**73,  
Pete Ostapchuk, N9SFX**

*PS: In the past, these have been sold by folks who claimed that they were used by allied spies in WWII.*

*This rumor is not true!*

*Please, only one to a customer*

## DID YOU KNOW?

***Do You Know How Many Active Satellites are Currently in Orbit Around Earth?***



In the 1830s, the telegraph started the electric/electronics revolution, leading to the sophisticated satellites that are currently in orbit circling the earth. The number of communications, weather, observational, GPS, scientific, defense and other satellites that are circling planet earth is about 10,000. And that number is growing.

You can Google "satellites orbiting earth" to see the locations of these satellites.

## KEEP IN TOUCH...

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

**Jim Wilson, Editor**  
*Dots & Dashes*

2742 Southern Hills Court  
North Garden, Virginia 22959  
(434) 245-7041

E-mail: telegraphjim@gmail.com

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

**Richard Williams**  
*International Secretary-Treasurer*

PO Box 181591, Coronado, CA 92178  
runnerrichard@hotmail.com  
(619) 818-9017

*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.**

[www.morsetelegraphclub.com](http://www.morsetelegraphclub.com)

**MORSE KOB PROGRAM**

[www.morsekob.org](http://www.morsekob.org)

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# Dots & Dashes

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*Hath*

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*Wrought*

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