



Dots&Dashes

What

Hath

God

Wrought

The Official Publication of the Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

Vol. 40, Issue No. 4 • Fall 2015

MTC ASSISTS BBC WITH A DOCUMENTARY FILM ABOUT SAMUEL F.B. MORSE AND THE TELEGRAPH

On September 15th, The Morse Telegraph Club demonstrated the telegraph for the British Broadcasting Corporation as the BBC television crew filmed the reenactment of the “What Hath God Wrought” telegraph message. Recall that the original date was May 24, 1844 as Samuel Morse operated the telegraph key at the U.S. Capitol and as Alfred Vail operated the key at the Baltimore Railroad depot. Morse and Vail became the world’s first two telegraph operators.

This BBC filmed reenactment took place at the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad

Museum in Baltimore, Maryland. This museum includes historic trains both outside and inside of the cathedral like oversized railroad round house. The impressive, large B&O RR Museum, located at 901 West Pratt Street in Baltimore, MD. 21223, (telephone 1 410 752-2490) is open to the public Tuesday through Sunday. Check www.borail.org

for special events and closing due to inclement weather. This museum is part of the U.S. National Smithsonian Institution Affiliated Museums.

In addition to advice and creative ideas for this documentary film, MTC also provided the telegraph instruments and other artifacts for this

telegraph reenactment. BBC Film Producer, Laura Ellis, expressed excitement about this event and she thanked the Morse Telegraph Club for assurance that the scenes were accurate. Michael Portillo, the golden voiced film moderator,

provided professional touches to this documentary.

International MTC President Jim Wades, your editor Jim Wilson, the President of the MTC Baltimore Washington Chapter, Hubert Jewell, and Hubert’s son “Buz” Jewell, were present for the filming in Baltimore on the 15th. Six members of the BBC film crew were on hand to accomplish



BBC videographer Ian prepares to film BBC Host Michael Portillo and WA Chapter President Hubert Jewell.

Dots & Dashes

The official publication of

The Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

Jim Wilson - Editor, *Dots & Dashes*

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Dots & Dashes is published quarterly as a benefit of membership. Nonmembers may subscribe at prevailing membership dues rates. Articles in Dots & Dashes (unless copyrighted or are themselves reprinted from other sources) may be reprinted, provided proper credit is given. A copy of the publication would be appreciated.

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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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General correspondence, which doesn't fall into the above categories, should be directed to the International Secretary/Treasurer:

Position open to anyone interested

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

➡ This ad runs routinely in the *World Radio News*:

Morse Telegraph Club

Landline Morse is Alive and well!

Dots & Dashes newsletter

The Ace Holman national telegraph office & hub

Internet Telegraphy Railroad Telegraphy

Morse Telegraph demonstration

Learn more about the history of the telegraph or

simply enjoy using American Morse Code and

authentic telegraph equipment.

www.morsetelegraphclub.org



Sidewire

Comments from the
Editor of *Dots & Dashes*

By **Jim Wilson**



As our unusually hot summer fades into autumn, we will be more comfortable with outside telegraph demonstrations. I encourage you to seek out opportunities to tell the world about the 1844 revolution in communications, the electric telegraph.

The Morse Telegraph Club did its part, working during September as a consultant with the BBC film crew at the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore. You have likely already read the MTC-BBC story on page one of this issue. I thank our International President Jim Wades for driving more than fourteen hours from Michigan to Maryland to bring with him the historic telegraph instruments and computer equipment that was used for the filming of "Great American Railroad Journeys." I was there snapping a few photographs for you and making notes for the front page article. The film crew was so professional and so were our MTC members. You will be proud when you get to view this television series featuring Samuel Morse and the electric telegraph.

Chapter News in this issue includes a description of activities from only three of our 29 MTC Chapters. I would like to hear from more of our chapters. Please share your experiences with our readers; we want to hear what fun you are having at your meetings and at your telegraph demos. And try to bring a friend with you to your chapter meetings or to share your copy of *Dots & Dashes* with a telegraph minded friend. Your enthusiasm can be contagious.

We are still in need of someone to step forward as a volunteer as our MTC International Secretary Treasurer. If you have the skills and the time, please contact President Jim Wades. This is a rewarding and valuable job. And the pay is priceless.

Please keep your telegraph sounders clicking and challenge yourself to recruit a new MTC member.

Jim Wilson

President's Line

Jim Wades, President
Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.



Dues Notice

Within this issue of *Dots & Dashes*, one will find a dues renewal form for members of the "Grand Chapter," also known as "members at large." As always, our goal is to keep costs low and minimize any requirement for future dues increases. We therefore encourage our Grand Chapter members to remove this form (or copy it) from *Dots and Dashes* and utilize it to renew their dues. This will save us the cost of mailing a renewal request. With close to 1000 members, the cost of mailing dues statements adds up very quickly! Please renew soon, so we can eliminate your address from the mailing list for dues reminders.

Chapter members should await receiving a dues notice from their Chapter Secretary/Treasurer. The individual chapters collect the dues from their members and then forward a single roster and check to the Grand Chapter. Therefore, do NOT use the form provided in this issue unless you are a Grand Chapter member.

Documentaries

MTC has worked with several organizations in recent months to incorporate telegraphy in museum exhibits and documentaries. Your International President attended meetings in Ohio and Pennsylvania to discuss the incorporation of telegraphy in museum exhibits, we arranged for a MTC member and former telegrapher to be interviewed by the BBC, and we have restored and provided telegraph instruments for various projects.

Our goal in such cases is to promote the accurate history of telegraphy. All too often, museum exhibits and documentaries contain errors ranging from incorrect annotation to the incorporation of inappropriate devices, such as radiotelegraph keys in the context of a railroad or commercial telegraph office. In the era of "Google" and similar search engines, even supposedly educated individuals with graduate degrees are losing the capacity to engage in detailed research. We often discover that

curators and museum staff are either unwilling or unable to move beyond the “eight second” Google search to ensure accuracy.

By offering our services to museums and documentary film producers, we can hopefully stop the trend toward a simplistic and distorted view of telecommunications history. We can also work to ensure that the telegraph industry is not marginalized by those who perceive telegraph technology as a simplistic child’s toy of little consequence.

Fortunately, we have found that the Internet has offered a significant benefit in the form of advertising. Our MTC Web Page has facilitated contact with many organizations looking for the “real” story of telegraphy. Usually, after a fifteen or twenty minute phone call, they are convinced that the story of telegraphy is an interesting and nuanced story worthy of respect.

Things are looking up! In recent years, we have been able to bring some real attention to the history of telegraphy and the telegraph industry and the men and women who played a role in this important story.

What are your instruments doing?

Do you have a basement full of telegraph instruments? Do you dust them every week? Does anyone see them? Are they used to educate and inform others about telegraph history and the role of telegraphy in the development of our modern culture?

Periodically, we hear of telegraph instruments being donated to aircraft museums, radio museums and other venues. Some of these organizations use the instruments to tell our story. Some do not. One of the goals of our organization is to not only provide instruments for telegraph exhibits and museums, but to educate others about telegraph history.

Members are encouraged to put their instruments and knowledge to use. Present a talk on the history of telegraphy for local ham radio clubs, railroad history associations, engineering societies and similar groups. Many libraries look for interesting short-term displays during which interesting historical items can be exhibited for a period of 30 to 90 days. Telegraph instruments and components can be donated to MTC for distribution to museums throughout the US and Canada, where they can be incorporated into proper, accurate exhibits.

Let’s not just collect instruments. Let’s put them to work! We have within our group the last generation of telegraph industry employees and operators. Now is the time to build our organization in order to create a lasting legacy to honor these contributions.

73,
James Wades
International President

*Dont miss your
membership renewal form
inside of this issue!*

continued from front page

the filming. President Jim Wades drove sixteen hours from Michigan for this filming. He brought the telegraph equipment with him to be used during filming.

This videotaped scene included interviews with Jim Wades and with Hubert Jewell. Hubert tapped out "What Hath God Wrought" several times for Ian's video camera. In addition, Jim and Hubert were asked various questions on camera about the



MTC International President Jim Wades signs required papers for release of MTC telegraph images with BBC crew member Jennifer Taylor.

invention and evolution of the electric telegraph. Host, Michael Portillo, also asked former RF&P Railroad telegrapher, Hubert, if during his 1941–1965 railroad employment, "Were there any messages that were of dire importance?" Hubert responded, "Oh yes." Hubert then elaborated for the television crew. Tune in to this BBC documentary to hear Hubert's complete answers!

The September 15th filming was day number six of seventeen days in the filming schedule for the BBC film crew. This Morse telegraph scene at the Baltimore museum will appear as part of the "Great American Railway Journeys." This particular episode is based upon an 1800's book. "All the places we go are mentioned in the book," explained film crew member Jennifer Taylor. The series is noted for quality and for authenticity. You can watch past series of Great Railroad Journeys by Googling the series on your home computer.

This documentary film about American railroading and Morse's invention of the telegraph is scheduled to be broadcast to audiences in the United Kingdom in February 2016. This segment will then be aired on U.S. and Canadian television approximately eight month later (September 2016) on PBS TV.



WA President Hubert Jewell chats with his son "Buz" at the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore, Maryland. Hubert will be seen as a telegrapher in the "Great American Railway Journeys" television series.

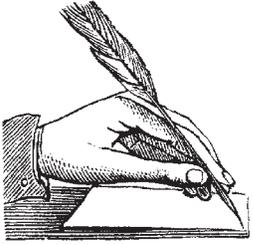
DO YOU KNOW?

Do you know what dust is, where it comes from, and why it is so important?

According to the *Holy Bible*, we are made from dust and eventually will return to dust. Science explain that billions of years of crushing gravity inside the hot nuclear furnace of stars, which later exploded, were required to create the dust particles, molecules of various elements that make up our bodies. Yes, each of us is a miracle!

Our vacuum cleaners suck up ordinary dust whenever we clean house. This dust in homes, offices, and other human environments contain small amounts of plant pollen, human and animal hair, textile fibers and paper fibers, minerals from outdoor sources, human skin cells, and burnt meteorite particles.

Dust is extremely important in the weather system, providing a catalyst in the creation of rain.



Letters to the Editor

August 6th

The purpose of my note is twofold. First, thank you for being editor; you do a very fine job. My copy of *Dots & Dashes* came yesterday and I could hardly put it down. Second, The Retired Western Union Employees publish a quarterly newsletter which is referred to as RWUEA. But our numbers are dwindling. When I was hired in 1958, the company was already in decline, yet there were still an estimated 25,000 U.S. employees. Attached is a copy of the RWUEA newsletter. I believe our RWUEA editor tries to lighten our spirits about our declining numbers by printing jokes and humorous stories.

*Ronnie Kollmann
Retired Western Union Employee
Newton, Iowa*

August 8th

I came across the latest copy of *Dots & Dashes*. While leafing through this very well done publication, I was attracted to the Fort Huachuca article [summer 2015 issue, page 8]. Observing the publications interest in historical accuracy, I wish to add a detail to the second paragraph of that story.

The "railroad station" mentioned in that article happens to be the B&O Railroad station. The historical importance of that is that the B&O Railroad was the first common carrier railroad in the country. And as I am sure that you know, railroad Morse was used. which is different from the Morse used by us hams.

*Respectfully,
Jerry KB3AP*

August 12th

Jay Gaynor was an important staff member at Colonial Williamsburg. I suggest you take a look on Google about his obituary. He was the authority on early tools. Of course, the telegraph instruments came along much later than Colonial Williamsburg, but Jay had a modest collection of telegraph instruments, which I believe

demonstrated his appreciation for design and function.

*Roger Reinke
(Roger is a previous MTC International
Secretary-Treasurer)*

August 13th

I have been meaning to write for two years. Jack has Alzheimer's and is now bed fast. He doesn't know anyone but me. If anyone is interested in his Morse code machine, it is for sale. Our telephone number is 321 231-0447. He also has some old billing forms, etc, from when he left the depot.

*God Bless,
Kay Griffin (wife of Jack Griffin)
Clermont, Florida*

August 17th

Our telegraphers volunteered their service to the Ukrainian Village, Alberta Railway Museum, and at a museum in Saskatchewan. All organizations where we have volunteered have greatly appreciated our services. We are hoping we can repeat this service next year, providing that we have enough people in good health. Our members volunteered on 7 different occasions at the Ukrainian Village and 11 occasions at the Alberta Railway Museum in Edmonton.

Here is a list of those who have recently passed away as members, wives, or widows:
Elsie Coulson: June 16 1924 – March 23, 2015.
Douglas Wilfred Luke: 1918 – December 11, 2014
Alice Parks: 1925 – June 11, 2015
Edith Eleanor McIntyre: 1937 – January 3, 2015
Raymond Strachan: June 22, 1932 – December 2, 2014
Lorna Jwaszko: Unknown – December 8, 2014

*Bill Tchir
Secretary-Treasurer
CG Chapter*

August 17th

Just got the new *Dots & Dashes*; another success! I can't remember if I sent this to you earlier. I was doing some research on another topic when I came

across this telegraphic love story from early day Montana. Many years later, I worked at Garrison, and also worked with Monida on the Union Pacific line when I was working at Butte in the mid 1960's.

It was a fun, romantic story, printed in one of Montana's largest newspapers at the time. I have tried to follow through on this but to no avail. I've wondered what happened to them in the following years.

On April 1st we had a good meeting. About 20 people attended at Deer Lodge, Montana. I read this story to the group and they suggested I send it along to you to be printed in *Dots & Dashes*.

I am also including a photo taken a year or so ago at Fort Missoula, Montana at the old Milwaukee Depot from Drummond, Montana. I work there occasionally doing demos, especially on major events like the fourth of July. I donated most of the equipment, etc., with some help from local Morse Telegraph Club members, especially the late Kerry Fascincani, our long time club secretary. The telegraph is always a hit with the younger and older set and we give them Student Telegrapher Certificates.

*Top 'er light and 73,
John Barrows*

August 20th



I'm sending you a photo of me some years ago on board the Canadian Naval Auxiliary Vessel Endeavour, a research vessel. I was on her for the last 18 years of my service, the good old CYWK.

*Cheers,
Pat Kelly
(Pat is a regular contributing writer to Dots & Dashes)*

August 24th

Your attention is invited to the enclosed letter which I sent to Dynamics Corporation of America on August 22nd. The letter explains what I am seeking to locate in the way of "old Communications gear." I am a new member of the Morse Telegraph Club so I don't know how to go about doing a classified or paying for an ad vial our MTC newsletter.

*Thomas Fletcher
Lewistown, PA*

*(See the House Track Want Ads for Tom's wish list.
Note that Want Ads are free to MTC members.)*

August 26th

Regarding the article by Andrew P. Puezko in *Dots & Dashes*, the train wreck that he refers to in the first paragraph [Summer 2015 issue, pages 9-11, "Railroading in the 1950's"], I followed a similar career path as Andrew did. But my career was with the Canadian National Railway (CNR).

The attached letter is a summary of the train accident. I also have a copy of the train orders that the troop train received when leaving its originating station, Jasper Alberta. However, as noted, the fatal train order was received further down the line at Red Post Junction.

As a side note, I substituted for the father of the operator involved when he attended the court case. Needless to say, he was quite relieved by the outcome of the court case when he returned. In later years, I met one of the soldiers who rode that troop train. He gave me his view of the aftermath.

*Merle Shockey,
Retired Train Dispatcher
Edmonton Alberta*

September 1st

I'm working on an article about the Postal Telegraph for a future issue of *Dots & Dashes*. My article is based on my recent display at the Antique Wireless Convention (which by the way won a blue ribbon in its class, photo attached, but please do not use the photo as I am saving it for the article). The cover photo on the 1992 December issue of *Dots & Dashes* of a Western Union telegraph office in Chicago is the best photo I've ever seen of what I think is a large Postal Telegraph office. Do you know if there is a better copy somewhere of this photograph?

*73,
Chris Hausler*

September 8th

With respect to the article, "Railroading in the 1950's on the Spare Board," (Volume 40, Issue #3), I too was a Spare Board Telegrapher in the 1950's with the Canadian National Railways on the Port Arthur Division, east of Winnipeg, Manitoba. I read with interest the article, which brought back memories from over half a century ago. There was one incident which I have never forgotten, which follows. It may be of interest to the readers of *Dots & Dashes*. Footnote: After writing the following, I took a double scotch to settle me down after relieving the memory on that night.

I was working 3rd trick at Savant Lake in January 1956. Savant Lake is on the CNR's Allanwater Subdivision. Savant Lake is some 300 miles east of Winnipeg. There was no electricity available at this location; battery power and a variety of oil-fuelled lanterns for light, with a caboose stove for heat. Savant Lake is a refueling and water station, and in the village there is a small hotel as well as a one room elementary school. The total inhabitants were less than 100. The following incident took place about 3 a.m. on a snow covered night.

The dispatcher in Winnipeg called me to the dispatch phone about 3 a.m. There is a west bound "Speed Freight" coming through your station soon and I do not want it to take the siding there for a meet with the next eastbound freight. I think that the westbound just might do that. Would you walk to the east switch to deliver a train order for a meet at the next siding to the west of Savant Lake?

The request startled me somewhat, but I agreed. A train order was given and I had about 20-30 minutes to do the walk. I dressed accordingly for the conditions with suitable clothing and footwear, and I carried a powerful personal electric lamp. It took me about 15 minutes to walk to the east switch. I thought that I would have some time to stomp out a suitable spot in the snow beside the track, to "hoop up" the train orders. No way.

This westbound was coming and it had no intention of taking the siding for a meet. I placed myself in the most subtle spot to hoop up the train order. Then I highballed the train and tried to indicate there was a train order to pick up. The train crew saw me, acknowledged my presence with the engine lights, and the head end brakeman hung right out of the cab to pick up the hoop. He managed, after giving me the appropriate hand signals, such as move towards the tracks and or

away from the tracks. It was a relief to deliver the order to the head end of the train! The tail end of the train did not get the order, as they were not prepared. I highballed the tail end, motioning to the hoop with my electric lamp, but was unsuccessful.

It took me another fifteen minutes or so to return to the station and I OS'd the train through. The train dispatcher said "Thanks." I visibly shook for the remainder of the shift.

I left the CNR in 1960. I must say that I was treated very well during my last few years. Centralized Traffic Control was coming to the CNR, which meant that the number of telegrapher's positions would be abolished and I would be on the spare board for a lengthy time. The only alternative that I could see for myself would be to obtain further education. Fortunately, CNR helped me a great deal. The company allowed me a leave of absence during the university terms, while retaining my seniority. So I was able to obtain a degree in Chemistry. I then spent my entire Chemistry career, some thirty years, with the Canadian Government in Ottawa.

*Lloyd Dalton
Kelowna, British Columbia*

September 9th

We have another day with 100 degree temperatures here in southern Oklahoma. I hope you are having cooler weather in your part of the world. (I may have to borrow some money from you to pay my electric bill keeping my house cool; ha, ha.)

I got the latest *Dots & Dashes* yesterday and enjoyed it as usual. One mistake in it said that Silent Key Mcalee Hime was a MAN. Not so; she was a woman and I knew her when she was a member of the Lone Star Chapter of MTC. I kept up with her for a long time, but lost track a few years ago. She was a wonderful individual.

I've sold all those items in my last advertisement in *Dots & Dashes*, so please remove the ad and put in this new one.

*Eugene Wood
Madill, Oklahoma*

(See our House Track Want Ads for Gene's items for sale.)

OUR NEW MTC VICE PRESIDENT,

J. Chris Hausler

As a recently appointed officer of your organization I have been asked to introduce myself and tell the membership a little about my background and interest in telegraphy. To start right out, I am not nor have never been a telegraph operator. My only memory of the land line American Morse telegraph is what I saw as a child growing up in the 1950's in the then pervasive "westerns" broadcast on television. Had you asked me back then or even much later, I would have told you that the telegraph was "ancient history". That said, I did develop an interest in things electric and electronic at an early age and did get a ham radio license in the early 1960's only to let it lapse. A dozen or so years later I got one again, the call I've had now for 40 years, WB2TLL, but I have never really been an active ham. The electrical and electronic interest did however lead to further study resulting in graduating from college in 1971 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering, specializing in computer science.

The job market for engineers was soft in the early 70's due to the winding down of the space race. Unable to immediately find employment in my chosen field, I studied for and got an FCC First Class Radiotelephone License, complete with Ship Radar Endorsement. This led to a job as a senior studio engineer in a local broadcast TV station. A year later, the job market having firmed up somewhat, I took the first decent offer I got which was working for General Railway Signal Co. as a real-time control systems computer programmer. Thus an accidental career in the railroad industry was born, one I finally retired from in 2010, several different employers later, at age 62.

Relatively early on I developed an interest in the history of technology, focusing at various different times on certain aspects of transportation, communications and computer technology. Since the late 1960's I have been collecting various historical computer items (my history, as I like to say). One of my sources for such items were the then large electronics flea markets which were common at hamfests. At one time the local ham radio group RARA, of which I am a member, hosted one of the largest electronic flea markets in the northeast. In the mid 1990's at one of these

while looking for more old old computer stuff, I came across one vendor who had couple of Signal Electric practice sounders for sale. For some reason on a whim, I bought one. As I joked at the MTC's Reunion banquet in Dearborn, MI in 2006, that sounder started all this and it's been downhill ever since.

That first sounder led to me study the history of land line telegraphy which led me to collecting more telegraph instruments which led to even more study. The thing I quickly learned which most surprised me was that the land line telegraph had still been in wide, if declining, use in North America back in the 1950's when I had thought it to have been "ancient history".

The annual convention of the Antique Wireless Association, held locally, also once featured a large flea market and was an even better source of telegraph materials. I started attending annually in 1997. At this convention in 2001, Tom French made me aware of the Morse Telegraph Club. I joined in late 2001 after communicating with the then GST, Keith LeBaron who remained a close friend up to his passing summer 2014. Mostly due to Keith's inspiration I became more interested in the MTC. I attended several of the Morse Day meetings in Rochelle, IL, even though that town is about 500 miles west of here, and wrote the occasional article for *Dots & Dashes*. At the last Morse Day meeting of the Rochelle Chapter in 2009 I was selected its president. Keith had been and remained its S/T for its entire existence. That chapter folded in late 2013 with Keith's failing health. Within a week of my discussion with Keith about closing that chapter, I was asked to become your International Vice President.

Also early last decade with my already developed interest in railroad history and my new found interest in telegraph history I assembled a working telegraph display at my local railroad museum using Jim Farrior's "The Mill" program to drive it and became an active docent at the rail museum. This led and continues to lead to requests to do telegraph displays and presentations at other venues here in Western NY, such as historical societies, other museums and railroadania shows. To be successful, I needed to study and learn even

more about telegraph history (and acquire even more telegraph instruments). A natural outcome of this is a growing collection of historical telegraph documentation and other information, an endeavor which continues to this day. This effort also conveniently provides material for my current book and film review column in *Dots & Dashes*. I have found that collecting telegraph instruments provides a touchstone or talisman for this history, making it “come alive”. Although it can be said that telegraph instruments can “speak”, sadly they cannot do so for themselves, so I have to do it for them.

After retiring in early 2010, I started attending the annual Dayton Hamvention to help man MTC efforts there and have also assisted at various other MTC events around the northeast. I find doing telegraph displays and presentations for the public to be the most effective way for me to try and keep the history of the telegraph alive. It also gives my now extensive, if historically modest, instrument collection something to do, rather than just collecting dust on a shelf. Their employment allows me to tell the story of the telegraph in a manner more engaging and immediate than mere words could accomplish. From its introduction about a decade or so ago, I became an early supporter and user of Les Kerr’s MorseKOB program and still manage to connect to one of the broadcast wires for a little “Morse Music” almost daily. In addition I use MorseKOB at most all of my public telegraph presentations and displays.

These days I find myself broadly invested in the MTC, both to preserve the history, art, science, technology, memory and lore of the North American land line American Morse telegraph system, and to help prepare the MTC to be able to continue this mission, to tell the story of the telegraph and the telegraphers, far into the future. I hope you all approve of my efforts. I welcome all comments, criticisms and suggestions.

^{73,}
J. Chris Hausler

SLOW MORSE SENDING SEMESTER 2015-2016

For the 16th year the Slow Morse Sending Semester 2015-2016 will resume Monday, September 14th, 2015 from 2000 to 2030 Central Daylight Saving Time (2200-2230 ADST) (1900-1930 MDST & Saskatchewan) (1800-1830 PDST). The following are volunteer instructors:

Monday	KA	Jim Kabaluk	(306) 586-9855
	DK	Dan Kollesavich	(204) 338-4913
Tuesday	JG	Gilles Gagnon	(613) 745-7656
	N	Earl Neal	(204) 414-1496
Wednesday	GH	Guy Hamel	(450) 486-4143
	JC	Jerome Lanoue	(450) 773-7938
Thursday	Y	Peter Hamel	(705) 472-8860
	R	Len Gafka	(250) 756-4188
Friday	AY	Andy Puczko	(403) 241-2593

Spare Morse Instructors

WA	Bill Atkinson	(403) 698-6206
	Luc Bonneau	(450) 463-2111
CA	Claire Conlin	(705) 748-0565
GC	Phil Gniazdoski	(705) 566-4722
F	Cliff Hine	(604) 888-5010
KY	L.R. Keith	(509) 650-1299
JM	Jim Mossop	(604) 853-3238
	Gerry Rath	(250) 545-0947
MA	Lavina Shaw	(604) 942-2184
FA	Francis Therrien	(705) 744-5614
KS	Ken Warren	(204) 421-7627

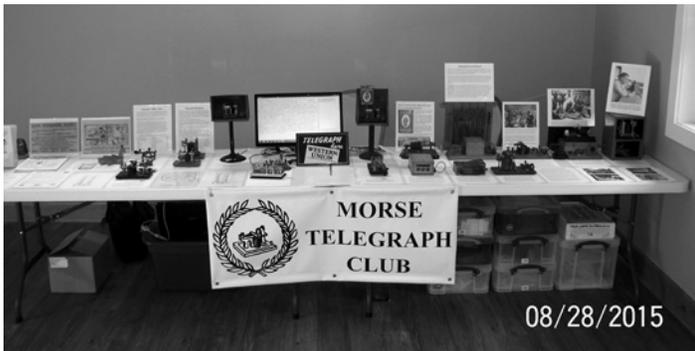
All Morse Telegraph Instructors are members of various Morse Telegraph Club Chapters and enjoy transmitting the art of Morse Telegraphy to younger generations through participation and education. They welcome all participants to attend and to SIGN IN at the end of each session.

The Canadian HUB is 1-888-822-3728

^{73,}
Dan Kollesavich

CHAPTER NEWS

Members at Large GC Chapter



August has been busy here in Western New York with a small display at the AWA convention and with a two day telegraph display at the Lehigh Valley Trail Fest in Mendon, New York. A local group called the "Mendon Foundation" maintains roughly 15 miles of the abandoned Lehigh Valley Railroad main line Right of Way (ROW) passing south of Rochester, NY as a hiking trail. This organization has recently focused more on the history of the trail, acquiring both an old LV box car from the former LV Manchester Yards and a flat car from my local railroad museum for display purposes. This is set up at what was formerly "Rochester Junction," where a branch up to their passenger station downtown Rochester came off the mail line.

The Mendon Foundation has undertaken other efforts to point out the history of the line to rail users as well. One of their board members, having seen one of my earlier telegraph displays, asked me if I would do a display at this event. This was the first time I have ever done a telegraph display for this group. I was set up in Westminster Hall, a banquet facility and former church, adjacent to the trail in Mendon. Instead of the usual 8 foot folding table that I usually get, they gave me two 6 foot tables, so this display represented the largest single telegraph display that I have done so far.

Foot traffic was a little light, but on those who did visit, there was a fair amount of interest and it has led to the possibility of some leads to future telegraph displays at other organizations as well. Sitting in front of my display at my "operating position," I joined the usual Saturday afternoon chat group on Morse KOB wire #11 with some of the visitors watching the communications. They were quite fascinated!

Thanks to J. Chris Hausler for this report

Maple Leaf ON Chapter

The Huntsville Train Station Society's museum and telegraph department in the old CNR station put on a very impressive display for the public in July. The sending and receiving of telegraph by the original Morse code was a real crowd pleaser. We know Morse code is a dying art, but as long as we're able, the displays will go on.

Thanks to Russ Nicholls for this brief report.

Washington-Baltimore WA Chapter

On July 18th, the WA chapter assisted with the 100th anniversary celebration of the Richmond, Virginia Railroad Museum. This event celebrated



the history of the Hull Street railroad depot. It was attended by an estimated 300 people and was covered on the local television news. Live music and free food added to the fun. Local politicians congratulated the museum on its progress. Railroad conductors stood by in uniform chatting with the public and telegraph operators transmitted Morse coded messages for visitors from the front office to the freight room.

On September 15th, the WA chapter assisted the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) with their documentary filming at the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Museum. This program, part of the "Great Railroad Journeys of the World," series, focused on American Railroads and on Samuel Morse and the invention of the electric telegraph.

This documentary film included a reenactment of the "What Hath God Wrought," message in May 1844 from the U.S. Capitol to the Baltimore Railroad Depot. International President Jim wades was present for the filming as was WA Chapter President Hubert Jewell, and WA Chapter Secretary-Treasurer, Jim Wilson.

The Morse Telegraph Club provided authentic telegraph instruments and worked with BBC as a consultant. WA President Jewell was interviewed on film as part of this Morse reenactment. We all look forward to seeing the final edit of this documentary film. Read more details about this upcoming documentary film on page 1.

Your D&D editor, Jim Wilson, wrote this WA report.

MARRIAGE BY WIRE

By John Barrows

There is a common lore about love and the telegraph wire. The stories are frequent of how, in the earlier days of the telegraph, sometimes operators fell in love at a distance.

Just such an affair was started, and culminated in marriage, in just a few short months, back in 1894, in Montana.

The lady operator, Etta Devlin, worked the night wire at Monida, a small station on the border of Montana and Idaho, on the Union Pacific Railway. The station was primarily a small agency, but was also a train order station, especially for the helper engines that were needed in those days. The road has a short connection to Butte, several miles away.

From Butte to Garrison the line was leased and jointly operated with the Northern Pacific, as a road called the Montana Union.

The article is particularly interesting because of the use of telegraph terms and slang. The Monida station stayed open into the 1960s

and I frequently heard them on the wire when I worked for the Northern Pacific at Butte and Silver Bow. Garrison closed in the 1980s, then a part of the Burlington Northern. Both railroad lines are still in operation.

Anaconda Standard, April 2, 1894

THEY LOVED BY WIRE

A Courtship That Breaks the Record for Prudish Peculiarity.

THEY KISSED AT LONG RANGE

Butte, April 1—An interesting little romance surrounds the marriage of R. C. Hill and Miss Etta Devlin, which was solemnized at the court house in this city last Thursday. The two young people had never seen each other until the day they met here to be married and their case proves conclusively that love can flow as freely across a telegraph wire a distance of 200 miles as when the divine feeling is expressed by word of mouth at a distance of six miles or less.

The manner in which Mr. Hill and Miss Devlin struck up the friendship which resulted in this marriage was decidedly unique. Mr. Hill is the telegraph operator at Garrison and his bride-to-be

O.S.'ed" trains at Monida, a little station a short distance this side of Pocatello and nearly 200 miles from Garrison. Miss Devlin seemed to be a very vivacious young lady, and when the wire was not busy she whiled away the quiet hours by chatting pleasantly with other operators along the line.

She seemed to have a preference, however, for Sam Geary, one of the dispatchers at the Montana Union depot here, and after a while the other operators drew out and left Mr. Geary in full possession of the field. On the first of last January Mr. Geary quit the service of the railroad company, and left Butte to go on the road in the interests of an Indiana tobacco house. His departure deprived Miss Devlin of her companion, and in order to comfort her in her loneliness, Mr. Hill struck up an animated conversation with her, which was continued whenever there was an opportunity for it.

Mr. Hill started in to talk to the young lady



While going to Telegraph School, we had part time jobs working in downtown Minneapolis in the Donaldsons and Daytons department stores to supplement our existence and expenses. After our 8 hours of work at the department store we took a city bus to the Northwest Telegraph School and practiced Morse Code and studies for six hours. Then we went home and slept and did it all again the next day, and 5 days a week thereafter.

In February 1957 we graduated and I and my Telegraph Class friend Gary Walters from Litchfield, MN were recruited by the Great Northern Railroad in Spokane, Washington. My Friend Rodney Nolin from Orr, MN got recruited by and hired on with the Southern Pacific Railroad in Oregon.

I had never been too far from home so this was a real adventure going to Spokane, WA. My friend Gary Walters had an old 1950 Nash Rambler that had a loose front end and shimmied terrible at 60 miles per hour that we drove to Spokane, WA. We drove at 55 MPH the whole trip to Spokane..

I borrowed \$200.00 bucks from my mother which was her money earned selling Eggs on the farm and away I went with my old blue metal suit case packed. Gary and I took two or three days traveling to Spokane. Upon our arrival we met our Great Northern Telegrapher Operator Manager, Mr. George Street on the second floor in the main Spokane Depot and ticket office.

Mr. Street promptly gave us our papers to have a quick medical check up and a Great Northern Railroad rule book to study. After getting an OK from the medical check up and studying the rules we reported back to Mr. George Street for the Rules Exam which we passed with flying colors. We were then hired on the spot and given our first assignments to break in for two weeks. I was sent to ESSEX, Montana and Gary Walters was sent to BELTON, Montana. Mr. George Street promptly issued me a Railroad Free Pass to enter train Number 4, The Western Star going east to Essex, Montana.

Before we actually went to work training we had a week to spare and we didn't know what to do with it so we decided on a "Whim" to go to Seattle, Washington to look around and just to say we did it, and that we had been there just because we both had never been anywhere before. So it took us two days going and one and a half days there. We looked around and saw a few sights and that was it. Then two days return trip to Spokane where I would catch my train to Essex, MT. We never got

a hotel, we just stopped where we could to get gas and clean up and grab a bite to eat as we didn't have a lot of money and we were cheap.

Upon arriving back in Spokane, I got my seat and connection on No. 4 "The Western Star" passenger train in the morning and Gary Walters took off going East on U.S. Highway No. 2 to Belton, MT in his 1950 Nash Rambler and his first job and training. Arriving in Essex, Montana in the afternoon on the Western Star, I was met by Mr. Wilbur Gulbranson who was working second shift and Mr. James Akers, who was the Agent at Essex, Montana at the time.



Essex, MT Depot March of 1957

I was escorted by Wilbur to the Iszak Walton Hotel where I got a room at the rate of a dollar a day which was the going rate for Great Northern Railroad Employees at the time. Meals were also very reasonable which were less than a dollar and if you really wanted to splurge you could spend a \$1.50. That included a meal dessert and milk. I wasn't getting paid yet so I lived as cheaply as I could until I actually went to work and got my hire on date as of March 8 1957.

For two weeks I was diligently listening in on



Wilbur O. Gilbranson also know as the Mayor of Essex, MT, 1991.

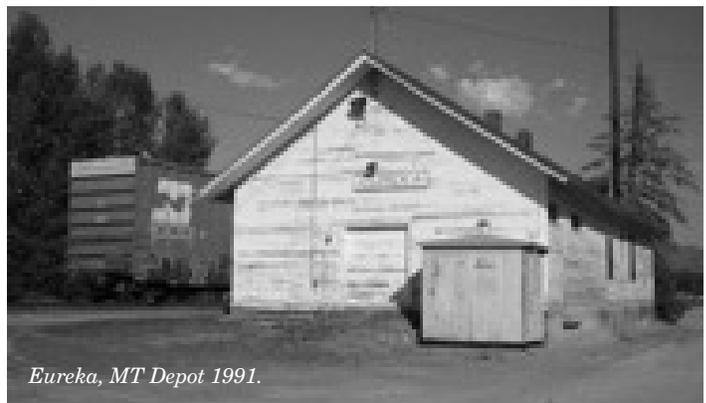
the Dispatchers phone and copying live train orders along with the regular operator Wilbur Gulbranson. This was a real awakening as we didn't get any of this kind of training in Telegraph School. And when I heard and tried copying the "Wire", I couldn't understand any of it. It was all a BLUR. Every "FIST" was different and every one had their bug adjusted to try and snow the other guy under with their fantastic whiz bang set up on their Bug. This was all show of course but I didn't know any different at 17 years old and trying to do my best. You know what? "I was Scared as Hell". I dreaded the day I would copy train orders live on the phone without anyone there to bail me out!! And the "Wire" was another dreaded thought. Because if the time ever came for me to copy a train order by wire I knew I could not do it without a lot of practice. Fortunately for me my diligence and persistence paid off as I practiced with all the different operators on this 24 hour train order station and when the time came for me to copy train orders by phone it was like I had been doing it all the time for years, (only two weeks). Mind you these train orders were written out by hand and it had to be readable by the Engineer and the Conductor as they didn't have much light to read by. Some of the orders that I saw later in my travels from station to station were basically unreadable. I don't know what the Conductor and Engineer did about that. Later they had radios in the Engine Cab and the Caboose to call the operator about the order if necessary.

My vacation relief job at Essex, Montana was ending and I received orders to go to Columbia Falls, Montana for the "Third Trick" vacation relief job. Midnight to Eight Am, five days a week. The Agent at Columbia Falls was Alexander McKane. At Columbia Falls I met Richard L. Gaertner (Dick) who was working straight second shift. Dick and I are still communicating and great friends to this very day. Amy Maher was the relief shift operator. Duane Lind was the first shift operator and also a Ham Radio operator. My work consisted of a few train orders by phone. Mainly my work was typing abstracts which the agent used during the day shift. There was the nightly Yard Check which occurred at about 3:00 Am each night. We had to tell the Dispatcher we would be gone about an hour depending on how many cars there were in the yard. Then write down all the Car Numbers and the Stub or track they were on (vital information) in the yard so the local switcher Engine Crew and the Agent could make their plans

for the coming day. A Lot of Lumber and Aluminum Ore moved through Columbia Falls. The midnight shift was busy for me and time went quickly. Agent McKane liked my work as there were very few if any mistakes in my work which was accurate and dependable.

My next vacation relief job was Libby, Montana. Mr. Ed Boyes was the Agent and was heard to be a bit tough on the relief operators. He actually called Mr. Alexander McKane at Columbia Falls for a recommendation on the type of guy I was and the work that I provided. Needless to say Mr. McKane gave me a great recommendation. The shift was again the Midnight hour until Eight Am with the customary Yard Check and the "Abstract" typing. A lot of lumber and Aluminum Ore moved from Libby, Montana to various parts of the country.

My next relief job was at Rexford, Montana where I met my good friend to this day Mr. John A. Swing. John Swing worked the 4:00 pm to Midnight shift permanently at Rexford. I worked the swing shift relief job which consisted of two nights on the 4:00 pm to Midnight shift, two nights on the Midnight to Eight shift and one Day shift. Rexford was a logging town so most of the revenue was from loggers sending their products to the Paper / Pulp mill at Libby, Montana. Clyde Voorhees was the Agent working the day shift. The Yard Check and train orders were the main operations going strong at Rexford, Montana.



Eureka, MT Depot 1991.

Eureka, Montana was my next vacation relief job, just 20 miles East of Rexford in 1958 and 1959 full 24 hour train order station. Agent Delbert Brown used the Yard Check from the Midnight to 8:00 Am shift. This was very necessary for the Agent Delbert Brown to complete Billing and Shipping. There were many box cars of lumber shipped from this location.

Later there was a terrible accident at one of the mills Delbert Brown was visiting. A piece of

2X4 wood broke off while passing through the mill planer and struck Delbert Brown in the neck juggler vein killing him instantly. What a tragic time that was.

I worked the third shift and the relief and second shift while the regular operators went on their 2 week vacations. During this time I was thinking I was getting good enough at telegraphy to enter the Relay Office Service. So I requested a transfer from Mr. George Street to go to the Whitefish, Montana Relay to do vacation relief there. My transfer was completed without even a test to see if I could handle the job.



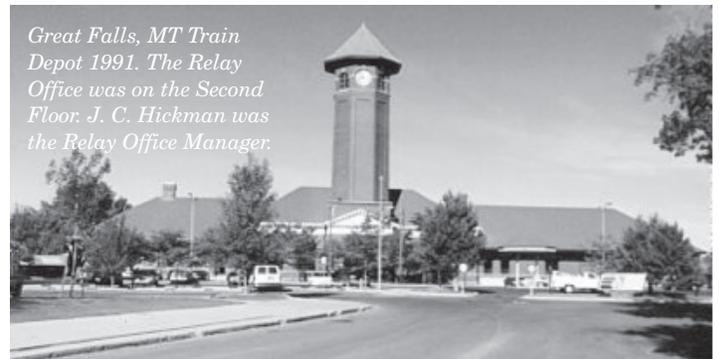
Vic Gray was the Relay Manager in Whitefish and I guess I met his approval as I went right to work no problem. I worked a couple of months there in the Whitefish, Montana Relay office. I then received notice they needed a vacation relief telegrapher in Spokane, Washington. About this time the teletype machines were making their inroads into these Relay offices and eliminating the Long Line Telegraphers between Relay offices.

But I thought I was a hot shot telegrapher in the Relay Office Service and I knew how to type! Actually I was doing real well learning the teletype machines. Most of the telegraphers could only type using one or maybe two index fingers on each hand. Here I was typing like crazy because I knew how to type using the touch system from my High School days. But in finishing High School I could only type barely 20 words per minute. Fear not a few weeks under the gun and I knew I had it made. While working as an Agent Telegrapher I used my spare time well by practicing diligently, especially on the third trick shift using the MILL to copy anything and everything from the main line wire. That included Train Orders because I knew from observation of the Relay Operators that

copying everything with the MILL was fast and efficient and was clearly necessary to be legible by everyone.

I left Whitefish, Montana for Spokane, Washington Relay Office where Mr. John L. Atkinson was Relay Office Manager and Louie Hyatt was the Hot Shot Wire Chief. Louie was real good telegrapher and Wire Chief too. I worked Spokane, Relay office for about two months while all the Telegraphers/Teletype operators took their two week and three week vacations.

Then the person that moved the Relay Telegraphers around decided they needed vacation relief in Great Falls, Montana. I received my Free Travel Pass on Great Northern Train No. 28 and was off to Great Falls for a two or three week vacation relief. It turned out that one of the Relay Operators got a serious illness and I ended up staying in Great Falls for almost a year. The Manager of the Great Falls Relay Office was Mr. J. C. Hickman. He was a big man, tall with grey hair and glasses and a real good telegrapher.



Great Falls, MT Train Depot 1991. The Relay Office was on the Second Floor. J. C. Hickman was the Relay Office Manager.

Well I thought I was doing pretty well copying regular messages from all offices on four different branch lines. But I soon found out that I didn't know Nuthin about telegraphing like some of the old timers on these branch lines did.

There was this Agent Telegrapher in Butte, (DX) Montana that came on about 2:00 pm in the afternoon calling Great Falls (PD). Well I answered the wire and this guy starts sending like a bat out of hell just as he always did to the regular operators who were able to copy him. His messages were one solid string of words and numbers and if you could telegraph you could copy him no problem. Well I broke him about 3 times and he told me (NM) and closed the key and shut down. Well the Relay Manager was listening to this going on so (JC) Mr. J. C. Hickman the Relay Manager sat down at another MILL and resonator and called the guy in Butte (DX) to GA send to JC.

Well immediately the guy in Butte wakes up and

has some sly remarks about not getting his train reservation messages out like he is used to. So JC just tells him to GA send, and the guy in Butte did exactly that. Well JC never broke him once because he was used to hearing this guys string of messages for years and JC just wrote it down one after the other on the MILL like it was nothing. And it wasn't real fast Morse Code it was just his style and his stringing of the short messages together like they were all one. But if you knew what he was doing it was easy. I didn't know how to copy this guy from Butte for about a month until I listened to him and got used to his style. Then I started copying him and maybe break once in a while but not too often. So he accommodated me and I learned his style and was able to copy him solid from then on.

Well after that little spell of time I thought I was doing pretty well.

But my high enthusiasm was quickly dashed the very next day when I hooked up with this Hot Shot telegrapher from Laurel (KD) Montana. This guy was really good and he had to be because his job was to send an entire train consist, 85 to 110 cars to our relay office in Great Falls (PD). This consist contained all the pertinent information about each car in the train. This guy had been doing this for years so therefore he was real good and very impatient. He had no time for guys like me and he told me so the first time I answered the wire to copy this train consist. He said copy an X14. This was the name of the form for the train consist. Well I was a little nervous because I heard the other operators copying this train consist to the form X-14, but this was a first for me. I broke him about 3 times and he said NM and called me a LID and slammed the key shut.

So again JC the Relay Office Manager had to bail me out and copy the entire train consist. Again JC called Laurel (KD) and told him to GA to JC. The guy in Laurel promptly did exactly that. Well even JC had to break him a couple of times to get the entire consist copied. Now mind you this was done on an old mechanical Royal typewriter or an old Underwood Mechanical typewriter. Not only that we had to use carbon paper four copies deep. You had to hit the keys extra hard to go through to the fourth carbon. Then sometimes the keys would jam. Maybe you could get it un-jammed and keep going but more than likely you would have to break the guy and tell him (keys jammed). Then un-jam the keys and tell the sender to GA at the last word copied. . Now as a matter of courtesy the

receiver would tell the sender to GA at the last previous word that was cleanly copied before the typewriter keys jammed.

Then when you arrived at the end of the page you had to remove the four copies in the MILL and insert a new set which you would have made up ahead of time so you wouldn't have to break the guy while putting the new set of carbon copies in the MILL. Sounds like fun, doesn't it. Well it was if you could copy Morse Code. I watched one of the operators Mr. Nicholas Maurantonio copying along and he decides he has to show off and light a cigarette and not break the guy sending from Laurel (KD). Well he did it all just fine, and I thought that was slick, but I didn't smoke. Not only that but the whole consist was tabulated on the MILL because it had to be done the same way when one of the teletype guys had to retype it for transmission via teletype tape to the ST Paul (V) Relay office Car Bureau.

When I tried copying this guy from Laurel (KD) the first couple times I tried it he wouldn't send to me because I broke him too often. He called me a LID and told me to Go HM. But after listening to him send I figured out that you had to listen and copy behind so you didn't have typing errors which was hard to correct on four carbon copies. Gradually I learned how to copy this guy and was able to take anything he put out. When he called (PD) after that I would answer and told him to send to (CB) which was my sign. I never did break him after that and later on after sending an extremely long consist of 125 cars he complimented me for improving so well in taking his transmissions. We were on the wire for more than an hour for a train consist this size.

I just told him Tnk U Very Much and that I made 4 carbons and tabulated the whole thing that u sent. He didn't realize that was what we were doing and was quite impressed.

This Great Falls Relay Office is where I learned to copy Morse Code as it should be. Later on I was able to copy anyone no matter how fast or sloppy they managed to send.

The Relay Office Manager, Mr. J C Hickman, who was a little dissatisfied with my beginning performance upon arrival in Great Falls, Montana decided to invite me to lunch indicating that he approved of my progress there in his Relay Office.

When I finished about a year of relief work in Great Falls, Montana, I was asked to report to Havre, Montana for vacation relief work for about two months. During this time a Permanent relief

job opened up in Spokane, Washington. I didn't have much seniority but I bid on it and got it because nobody else wanted it. So there I was with a Bid-In-Job at Spokane, where I worked for about two years.

A Relay Operators Job opened up in Klamath Falls (K), Oregon for relief operator, which was a vacation relief for several months. Mr. John L. Atkinson was Manager by way of recently bidding this job and leaving the Spokane (Q), WA Managers job. Mr Jim Black was a good friend and one of the Relay operators working the second shift at the time. I finished my vacation relief there in Klamath Falls (K) and headed for Seattle (F) for several weeks of vacation relief. Mr Cecil G. Johnson was the Manager and Charles T Dolan was the Wire Chief for Seattle (F) relay office at the time.

Then because of expansion of the Relay Office in St. Paul, (V) Minnesota several permanent jobs opened up in the Car Bureau section to handle train consists via the teletype from all the various yard and relay offices. I bid on one of the Car Bureau Jobs and got it. Now I had to move all my personal belongings from Spokane to St. Paul. I requested a Great Northern Railway Box Car to load all my belongings into, which I did myself. Then I requested a Free coach Pass on the Great Northern Western Star No. 4 to St. Paul.

Eventually my belongings arrived via the box car and I unloaded it by myself to my house I had rented in North St. Paul. Mean while my work and job in the Car Bureau was going great. It didn't involve much telegraphing, but did involve a lot of teletype operator work. Receiving teletype tapes of train consists from the various Relay Offices. Using the received teletype tapes to convert the coded tapes to IBM punch cards via a

small computer called Remington Rand 1004 was my job. Each IBM Punch Card contained all the Information about the Car Number in the train consist, such as contents, origin, destination and routing.

Mr. Bob Branchaud was Manager of the Car Bureau Office. This was a 24 hour operation which involved receiving Teletype tape transmissions from Klamath Falls, OR and Seattle, WA and all the relay and yard offices on the entire GNRR.

During this time working in the Car Bureau I could see the hand writing on the wall for telegraphers. This type of work was gradually being phased out for the use of teletype everywhere. My work shift was 4:00 pm to midnight five days

a week. This worked out great for me. I signed up for a Computer Training Course with Control Data Institute in Minneapolis, Minnesota. This was a 10 month course for 6 hours during the day. Then I had to make it to work at 4:00 pm. This was a bit tiring schedule but I stuck with it and graduated from Computer School as a qualified Computer

Technician. By this time I had completed over eleven years with the Great Northern Railroad. I knew that I would eventually get Railroad Retirement if I lived long enough to retire.

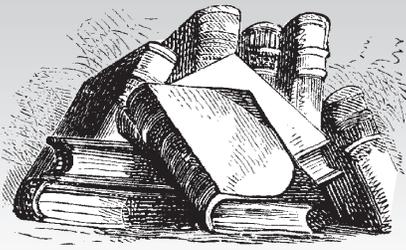
Now here is an observation of what was going on at the Great Northern Railroad and the St. Paul Relay (V) office. They had about 25 Relay operators working there in our office including the Manager and Wire Chief. Now I don't know exactly why they did this but here is the story. We were making about \$2.55 an hour in 1967 and 1968 union wages. The Midnight shift and the second shift were paid a nickel an hour more at \$2.60 per hour as an incentive to get



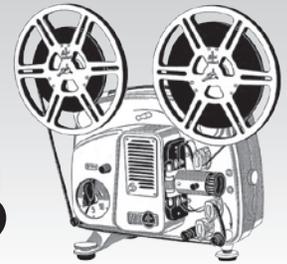
Here is a Photo of me at the GNRR Building Car Bureau 9th Floor. ST Paul, MN, The Telegraph Relay office was on the 8th Floor. I am Clem in the center with my co-workers Year 1967.



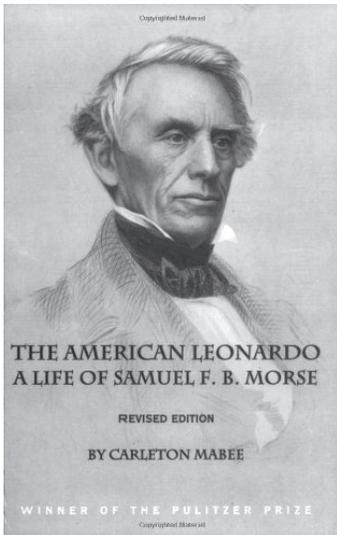
Here I am Clem 48 years later with my wife wearing the exact same sweater. As in the picture above July 2015.



J. Chris Hausler's BOOK & MOVIE REVIEWS



In last winter's edition of *Dots & Dashes*, your Editor mentioned the passing of Carleton Mabee just a few days short of what would have been his hundredth birthday. Mr. Mabee was the author of one of the most respected biographies of Morse, titled, *The American Leonardo, A Life of Samuel F. B. Morse*. Originally published in 1943, it won the 1944 Pulitzer Prize for Biography. With this I thought it would be appropriate to review this work as well as a much more recent one to try and get a better feel for Morse the man.



As a side note, in researching this book I found reference to a film based on the book made as part of an early TV series entitled, *Pulitzer Prize Playhouse* which apparently ran between 1950 and 1952. This particular film was episode 12 of season 2 and apparently aired on May 21, 1952 on ABC. Although the early episodes in the series were 60 minutes

long, this one, the second to the last, was only 30 minutes long. It is hard to understand how they were able to present even a tiny amount of the content in this book in such a short time, even if they had used a whole hour. So far, I have been unable to locate a copy of this film either on-line or for purchase.

The book, like all good biographies, deals with the entire life of it's subject and thus the telegraphic part of it doesn't begin until about the middle of the book as Morse was already 53 years old, considered almost old age at that time, when the first Washington-Baltimore demonstration telegraph line was constructed in 1844. That said he lived to just a few weeks shy of his 81st

birthday, outliving many of his friends, immediate family and associates, but not all of his nemesis's.

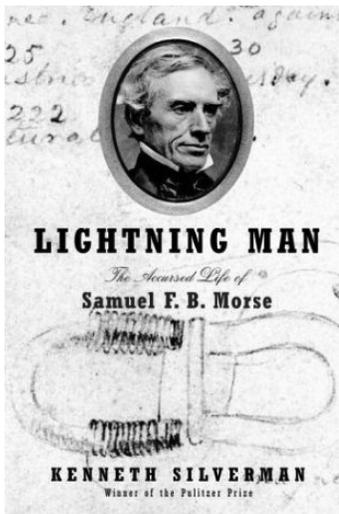
I'm not going to detail much of the content of this book as likely many of you already know a fair amount about the man, who in his younger days was known by his second name, Finley. If you aren't familiar with Morse's story, the whole purpose of this review, and this review column in general, is to get you to read (or watch in the case of films and videos) the items reviewed. Have at it...

Morse was a complex man, one of strong beliefs religious and otherwise, and the book although somewhat reverential toward Morse does point out what some might consider his "character flaws". Some of his strong beliefs ran counter to popular opinions of the time but this didn't stop Morse from wading into the fray with "all guns blazing". He was a sought out as a writer of inflammatory pamphlets, the "blogs" of their day, taking opinionated sides on whatever was the issue at hand. This habit cost him disappointment more than once.

Most of you also know that Morse, the son of a well known preacher and geographer, became himself a well known painter. His paintings today are prized possessions. The book points out that although starting out as a fine artist, Morse did have an organized and scientific mind and analyzed his art to understand in a technical sense how he was able to achieve various artistic effects such that he could reliably reproduce them. His ability to organize men into productive groups is evidenced today in the still extant National Academy of Design, of which Morse was the principal founding member and first president. Unfortunately, despite all his artistic skills, Morse was never able to make a decent living as a painter. He was a good example of the "starving artist".

Morse's life was far richer than the above might lead one to believe but if you want to find out more, you'll have to read the book. I have found this well

known book available from local libraries and also available for purchase from Amazon. It has been reprinted several times under various ISBN's.



The second book on Morse I'm reviewing for this column is, *Lightning Man: The Accursed Life of Samuel F. B. Morse*, by Kenneth Silverman and first published in 2004. Silverman is also a winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Biography but for an earlier work. This is probably the first serious biography of Morse since Mabee's

work. As both tell the life story of the same man, there is much similar in both books. This book is less reverential toward Morse than Mabee's work and seems to go into more detail about a number of the situations discussed. One item discussed in more detail is the development of Morse code with Silverman coming out strongly in favor of Morse. Apparently Alfred Vail's wife along with congressman F. O. J. Smith, who turned out to be Morse's major nemesis, continued to argue

against this well after Morse's death, Smith even lamenting that Morse died before he could heap even more abuse on him and his legacy.

One favorite passage of mine in this book deals with when Morse visited Naples Italy. We all know Morse was almost rabidly anti-Catholic and strict Calvinist that he was saw the moral climate in Italy ever more sordid the further south he went. This even though he was reveling in all the fine art he was finding there. In Naples he found no libraries nor literary societies and was particularly put off by and wrote about a local food specialty, "a species of most nauseating looking cake...covered over with slices of pomodoro or tomatoes, and sprinkled with little fish and black pepper and I know not what other ingredients, it altogether looks like a piece of bread that had been taken reeking out of the sewer." The author points out that this is likely the first description written in English of an anchovy pizza.

Both books are a good read and both deserve reading but if I had to suggest just one, it would be this one by Silverman. It, being more recent is even easier to find (more copies available) at local libraries and, of course, one can also buy a copy from Amazon, with used copies going for as little as 1 cent (plus shipping). Enjoy!

EXTRAORDINAIRE TELEGRAPHER

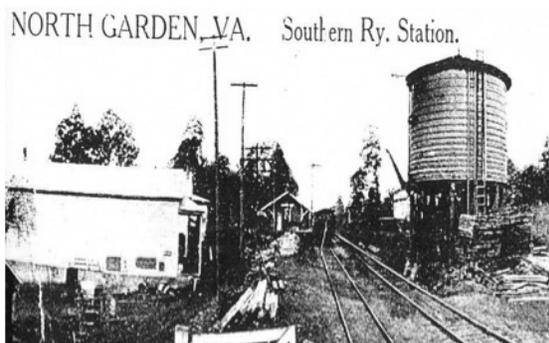
By William Marley



Not many telegraphers had careers as distinguished as Percy Hudson's. Born in 1886 in North Garden, Virginia, Percy served as agent-telegrapher at the North Garden, Virginia Southern Railroad system depot for 54 years. Actually, his service began two years earlier since he first worked as a helper at the station prior to his actual employment, which began in 1906. As a

helper, Percy learned to operate the Morse code telegraph equipment. Up until 1916 the main line was a single track. During construction of the double track in 1916, the North Garden depot consisted of

four box cars- one for the agent, one each as waiting rooms for white and black passengers, and the fourth as a freight warehouse. Percy retired in December 1960, having served under 18 superintendents. Shortly after his retirement a letter was received from John P. Hyde, general chairman of the Order of Railroad Telegraphers. The letter stated- "I want to tell you, Percy, that it's men like you that have made



this Southern Railroad System the good railroad it is today."

“30” SILENT KEYS

News of our brothers and sisters who have closed the key



Saskatoon KN Chapter

STEPHEN JAMES “JIM” LITTLE, age 75, of Saskatoon passed away unexpectedly on December 21, 2014 with his family by his side. He was the youngest of six boys, born on the family farm near Lintlaw, Saskatchewan on April 13, 1940. Jim spent six years as a station agent with the Canadian National Railways, a job that took him to many communities in the province. He then worked in municipal administration for thirty-five years before retiring in 2000. Jim was involved in many community organizations. He and his wife, Georgie, enjoyed retirement, by spending 15 winters in Yuma, Arizona. His many hobbies included collecting stamps and collecting Saskatchewan license plates and restoring a family tractor from the 1940's, an Allis Chalmers tractor. He loved history and genealogy and was writing the Little family history from memories of his younger days. Jim was a family man who enjoyed nature and spending time with his grandchildren and great grandchildren. He is survived by his wife, daughter, two sons, five grandchildren, one great grandchild, and numerous other relatives.

Thanks to Len Solomon, President and Secretary-Treasurer of the Saskatoon KN Chapter, for this information.

Len adds that, Jim had been a long time member of the MTC and had moved from Lintlaw to Saskatoon only about two years ago. “It was nice to have met Jim at one of our meetings.”

Terre Haute TH Chapter

LEROY EATON passed away on August 20, 2015. Leroy was a veteran of the Korean War and a graduate of Indiana State University. He retired from the Eli Lilly Company as an instrument technician. Leroy held the amateur radio call K9LE.

Thanks to Howard Eskridge, Secretary-Treasurer of the Terre Haute Chapter, for this information.

Blackhawk GT Chapter

EDWARD V. WELCH, age 89, died on July 31, 2015. He was born on May 12, 1926, eight of ten children. Ed served in the Navy during WWII. After attending two years of Business College in Chillicothe, Ed began his career in 1949 with the Burlington Northern Railroad, originally the CB&Q RR. After 41 years with the railroad as telegraph operator and depot agent, he retired in 1990. Ed and his wife Dorothy celebrated 60 years of marriage in 2012. He was a faithful Baptist and longtime member of the local Eagles Club.

Thanks to Roger A. Edge, Sr. for this interesting information.

Roger adds that Mr. Welch used to baby sit with his children when his wife was school teacher. Also, Roger used to relieve Ed as an operator at the Kirksville CB&O depot when Edward went on vacations. The Kirksville, Missouri station call was V.

Vancouver DI Chapter



ANDY DUMAS, age 87, of Port Coquitlam, BC, passed away on July 25, 2015 after a long battle with cancer. Andy was a telegrapher and station agent on the Northern Alberta Railway, leaving the railroad in 1968 when stations began to close. He retired in Port Coquitlam after

being a main-line bus driver. Andy was active member of the Vancouver “DI” Chapter, attending all the meetings with his wife, Margaret, and he participated in all the chapter’s Morse demos. He furnished the station museum in Girouxville, Alberta with telegraph equipment and literature. This was a station where he once worked. Andy won several awards playing baseball and snooker and he was an avid bridge player. He is survived by Margaret, three sons, and a daughter.

Thanks to Lavina Shaw for this information

Lavina adds, “I will certainly miss Andy. He drove me to all the meetings and Morse events in recent years and he helped me set up the displays.”

CD Combs FN Memorial Chapter

JAMES C. SMITH, age 91, of Omaha passed away on May 16, 2015. Jim was born on October 23, 1923 in Omaha, Nebraska. He graduated from Benson High School in 1940 at age 16, and then began working for the Union Pacific Railroad as a station helper in North Bend, NE. It was there that Jim learned telegraph using the Morse code, 1941-41. Until 1953, He was a telegrapher and agent until 1953, when he was promoted to train dispatcher. Jim worked in that position in Omaha and Grand Island until his retirement in 1983.

Jim was drafted into the U.S. Army during WWII, where he served in the European theatre. He met his future wife, Andree on November 11, 1944 while serving as a Tech sergeant in a transportation company as the Allies pushed thru Europe. After the war ended, Andree and Jim married on August 14, 1945 (V-J Day) in her hometown of Liege, Belgium. She arrived on a ship with hundreds of other war brides.

Jim and Andree lived in Omaha, where they raised most of their eight children. In 1975, they bought a small 40 acre farm outside of Council Bluffs, Iowa, where they threw themselves into working the land. In 2010, after the acreage became too much for them to manage, the couple moved to the comfort of the Paxton Inn in downtown Omaha. Here they could walk around the mall, attend nearby shows, and dine at a European style Bristow restaurant.

Jim Smith was a charter member of the Morse Telegraph Club which formed in 1985. He was also dedicated to the Catholic Church and was a member of a local book club and liked to sing. Jim is survived by his wife Andree of 70 years, 8 children, 20 grand children, and 5 great grandchildren.

Thanks to Richard Behrens, Secretary-Treasurer of the CD Combs Memorial Chapter, for this fascinating information.

Winnipeg WG Chapter

WILFRED WILLIAM (BOB) WELLS, age 85, passed away at the Saint Boniface Hospital Winnipeg, MB on June 29th, 2015. Bob was born in Sidney, NS on February 14, 1930. He learned his telegraphy in 1952 on the VCR. Bob began his career with the Canadian National Railways as a telegraph operator, working one year then transferring to the CNT and finally retiring from the CN/CP Telecommunications department. He was

predeceased by his wife Colleen in 2001 and is survived by his son, Robert Tracy of Winnipeg.

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

Maple Leaf ON Chapter

KEN ROLAND ANDREWS, age 81, became a silent key from lung cancer on August 29, 2015. He was born in Stratford, Ontario on May 15, 1934. When Ken was 14 or 15, he worked at the Stratford "SF" Commercial Telegraph Office as a messenger boy. This is where he also learned the telegraph. In 1950, he attended the CNT Mux School to learn teletype.

Thanks to Donald Laycock for this information.

Don adds, "Ken was an avid member of the Maple Leaf Chapter and he will be missed by all." Thanks also to Joann Andrews, niece of Ken, who telephoned me with the news of her uncle's demise.

Edmonton MO Chapter

LORRAINE "COOKIE" PROCYK, wife of a former member of MTC, passed away on September 8, 2015. Her MTC member husband, John Procyk, passed away in 2004. John had been an operator, train dispatcher, and rule instructor. Four children, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren will cherish memories of John and Cookie.

Thanks to Bill Tchir, Secretary-Treasurer of the Edmonton Chapter for this brief information.

RAILROAD TELEGRAPHER USES OLD MORSE CODE KEY TO KEEP IN TOUCH

By Jim Eadie

The rhythmic, musical “clickity-clack” sound of a train as its heavy cars passed over

the joints in the railroad track rails has connected deeply with songwriters and storytellers over the past century on this continent. Now, with new continuous rails without joints, it is a sound that has disappeared from our repertoire.

Also gone is the “clickity-clack” if the railroad telegrapher’s sounder, musically narrating messages from one end of the wire to another as the operator simultaneously typed the coded messages

on a mechanical typewriter. This method of communication was not retired until the 1960s, but it had absolutely revolutionized communications across land, sea and air during the century before. In fact, data is still

transferred the same way in this modern age, but just at a speed billions of times faster.



Ted Sprackett was a young boy growing up in Gilmour Ontario during World War Two. His grandfather James H. Sprackett was a farmer and sawmill operator who was a municipal councillor for 16 years, and then Reeve for 29 years including time as Warden of the County of Hastings. Also serving the municipality as councillor and Reeve was his Ted’s father Ross. Young Ted Sprackett’s family lived in the former hotel property

within eyesight of the railway station, and the family sawing operation.

Young Sprackett worked in the family logging operations where his grandfather had a private railroad line extending from the CNR tracks in

Gilmour, for 18 miles into Grimsthorpe Lake. Leaving home with a lantern to work in the bush, he returned at night with the lantern lit again, "dead tired." Using a small wood burning locomotive, the logs were drawn out of the bush using small trailers to be sawn at the family operation.

In his time off, Sprckett and several friends were not above getting into a bit trouble with the station agent in Gilmour. They were eventually caught tying one of the small flatcars on behind the parked northbound CNR train using binder twine, and going for a ride north being pulled by the train. Upon reaching Mawson's Store at Steenburg, Sprckett and his co-conspirators would cut the binder twine, and the trailer would be set off the tracks. After getting ice cream cones, the young men set the flatcar back on the tracks.

"A couple of kicks, and we were off," he said. "The railway line ran down hill all the way back to Gilmour."

Sprckett was also a popular local piano player, and made the rounds of parties and community celebrations. As a musician, he also noticed the rhythmic sound of the telegraph sounder at Gilmour, as he was spending a bit more time hanging around the station now, having apparently had made up with the station agent.

"It amazed me that he could make words out of those sounds," he said.

But Sprckett had another thought on his mind.

"You know, working in the bush .. well you get home at night, and you would be so tired that you couldn't care if you lived or died." The telegrapher position was looking good to the young man. "I could just keep working in the woods," he said, "but this looked like the perfect job for me!"

As it happened, a job posting for telegrapher training caught his eye, and the station agent agreed to put in a good word for him.

"The station agent was Mort Baker," said Sprckett, "and he had one prosthetic leg."

In 1951 Sprckett received his training at Stirling Ontario, and there followed numerous

postings over the next four years as telegrapher in Hastings County; Gilmour, Coe Hill, Bannockburn, Madoc Junction and Bancroft.

"Bancroft was a very busy station at that time, as the uranium mines were in full operation," he said. "Coe Hill was very quiet .. there was the odd fuel car for Clark Rollins .. the gas station, and some saw logs and pulpwood."

Then followed a series of appointments as he moved through the seniority system with Canadian National Railway until 1961 when he was appointed as telegrapher in Belleville, Ontario.

"In the 1960s and 70s, Belleville was the major terminal between Toronto and Montreal," he said. "There were 4000 employees including up to 70 train crews stationed there. With the last of the steam engines ... trains got big and long .. and there was less and less need for the Belleville yard."

"I could read 50 words per minute .. a good operator could do that," he said. "And I would type it with two fingers!"

That is almost as fast as the fancy new Teletype machines that replaced the telegraphers in 1964. It is pretty amazing what a human can do.

Sprckett continued to be promoted within the organization, until his retirement in 1986... as director of marketing for CN Express.

He continued to work for seven more years with Meyers Transport as their Director of Marketing.

Sprckett still keeps in touch by "clickity-clack" with some of his old friends. The Morse Telegraph Club has an Ontario chapter, and he remains an active member. The club holds meetings, and offers demonstrations at community events.

A system has been designed whereby he and his friends across North America can connect their Morse code keys and sounders to their telephone line through a device, and communicate with each other the old fashioned way.

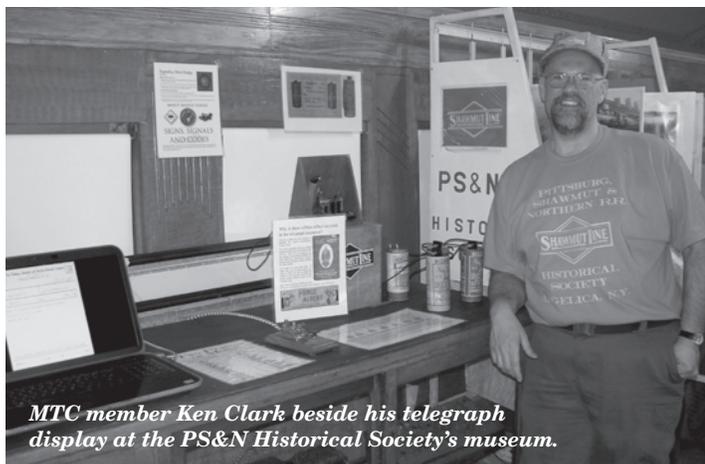
"I had a great life with the railroad," said Sprckett.

"I wouldn't trade it for a million dollars!"

NEW MUSEUM TELEGRAPH DISPLAY

By J. Chris Hausler

Earlier this year I was made aware of a new telegraph display put into service by MTC member Ken Clark at the Pittsburg, Shawmut & Northern Railroad Historical Society's museum. This museum is located on the Allegany County Fairgrounds in Angelica, NY. What's more, although living in Virginia, Mr. Clark, a member of the society, was going to come up to the site during the week long Allegany County Fair, held July 13-18 this year, as a volunteer docent and to man his display.



MTC member Ken Clark beside his telegraph display at the PS&N Historical Society's museum.

Well, Angelica is only about a two hour drive from where I live and so I decided to spend a day at the fair to see the new telegraph display and to visit with Ken and the other PS&N volunteers. I had been aware of this museum and in fact had visited it once about 20 years ago but it was just far enough away that I hadn't been back since. Now I had an excuse to visit once again.

Ken Clark grew up in Olean, NY next to surviving former Shawmut tracks, by then operated by the PRR. The Clark's were from around that area and the family members had once used the PS&N to keep in contact. They regaled him with stories of its former glory. Although he joined the PS&N Historical Society shortly after it was formed, as an IT professional doing government work he had moved away from Olean to the DC area and thus away from active participation. Becoming more involved a few years ago, he was looking for a way to use his computer skills, particularly to recruit new younger members to the society, by building interactive displays. In this process, a telegraph demonstration came to mind and in researching the possibilities he found the MTC and from that MorseKOB. The rest, as they say, is history.

The telegraph display put together by Ken Clark is based on Les Kerr's MorseKOB 4.0 software written in Python. Ken has added an interesting addition to the

software. It shows a blank PS&N Form 19 on the display and as you hear a telegraphic train order being sent on the sounder, the appropriate fields on the Form 19 are filled in on the screen. Ken's telegraph set-up is located in restored PS&N wooden coach No. 278, one of several pieces of actual PS&N rolling stock preserved at the museum.

The PS&N was a somewhat obscure class 1 railroad formed at the dawn of the 20th Century mostly from predecessor roads. Its primary business was hauling soft coal from northwestern Pennsylvania to western and central NY. At its most northern extent it reached Wayland, NY where it interchanged with the DL&W. Just shy of that interchange the PS&N crossed over Stony Brook Glen on a high trestle. That trestle was the destination for many rail excursions as the area was very picturesque. It still is and the area now is a New York State park. The railroad had shop locations in both Angelica and St. Mary's, PA and the brick Angelica passenger station still exists in private hands. Some say the PS&N is most famous for going bankrupt after only six years of operation and then remaining in operation, but in receivership, for the remaining 42 years of its existence. It finally went out of business in 1947. As obscure as it was, sometimes described as "a railroad that started nowhere, went no place with a lot of nothing in between", it has a devoted fan base and several books have been

written about its history. With this interest, the society was formed in 1981 and it is now a 501c3 corporation. You can learn a lot more about the PS&N and the society on its web site at: www.psnrrhs.org. MTC member Clark is the webmaster.

If you get a chance I highly recommend visiting this museum. You will not only see an nice telegraph display, but the museum as a whole is well worth the visit.

FORM 19	The Pittsburg, Shawmut and Northern Railroad Company	FORM 19
JOHN D. SICKMONS, President		
TRAIN ORDER No. 45		
JUL 17 1915		
To C&E ENG 74 & 75	At SM JCT	
X BAUER	Opr.:	236 P.M.
ENG 74 SEVEN FOUR COUPLE ONTO ENG 75 SEVEN FIVE RUN EXTRA JCT TO TOWER MEET EXTRA 70 SEVEN NAUGHT SOUTH AT VALLEY		
J.C.F.		
Each employee addressed must have a copy of this order.		
Made COM	time 237 P.M.	BAUER Opr.

Close up of the screen display showing the Form 19 train order as filled in.

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: 2015 Railroad Calendar. The Inland Empire Railway Historical Society offers a stylish 2015 wall calendar of historic railroad events. To order a calendar, write to the IERHS at P.O. Box 471, Reardan, Washington 99029. Their annual membership is \$25.00 which includes a calendar. The IERHS is a 501-c nonprofit corporation, so all donations are tax deductible

AVAILABLE: I can duplicate small wooden resonator boxes for both 4 ohm and 30 ohm main line sounders. You will varnish or paint these to suit your desires. The cost is \$25 each. Milton Hegwood, 206 Kleven Avenue, Culbertson, NE 69024, telephone (308) 278-2152

AVAILABLE: Period attire for telegraph operators of any era. Authentic reproduction hand crafted clothing will be made to your exact fit by a certified seamstress at reasonable prices. Several MTC members already have attire provided by this talented and well educated lady. Contact Valerie Mathers at (410) 768-3162.

AVAILABLE: Pen & ink railroad drawings on stretched canvas, frame print, art print and greeting cards. See these on the website of *Dots & Dashes* member Peter Hamel at Peter Hamel Fine Art American.com. Telephone (705) 472-8860.

AVAILABLE: Book. Hubert Jewell, President of the Washington-Baltimore Chapter, offers us his biography titled, *Working on the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad*. This book is chocked full of facts and descriptions of railroading and of Morse code communications. Hubert's book is available from the RF&P Historical Society, Inc. PO Box 9097, Fredericksburg, VA 22403-9097 or from the web site www.frandp.org. The price is only \$25.15 postage paid.

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

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

AVAILABLE: Older Railroad employee timetables, many of which show station Morse calls. These are from several different railroads. Please send a SASE for a list. Contact me only by mail as I don't have email and don't answer phone calls from unknown area codes. My address is 104 Sunset, Madill, Oklahoma 73446-2051. Eugene Wood

AVAILABLE: "Morse code machine" and old billing forms from the estate of Jack Griffin. Phone Kay Griffin at (321) 231-0447 or write to Kay at 12239 Montevista Road, Clermont, Florida 34711.

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



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

Jim Wilson
Editor

Dots & Dashes

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

International Secretary-Treasurer

Position currently open to anyone interested

Please do not send address changes for Dots & Dashes, dues renewals, etc., to the Editor. All mailing lists and membership rosters are prepared through the office of the International Secretary.

Ham Radio Web Sites

For those of you who are amateur radio operators, here are four current web sites that I find useful:

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

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