



Dots&Dashes

What

Hath

God

Wrought

The Official Publication of the Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

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BIOGRAPHY OF A TELEGRAPHER

This new column was suggested by our International Secretary-Treasurer Richard Williams.

Richard and I hope you will enjoy reading about 86 year old Don Young and hope that you will contribute your own stories for readers of upcoming issues of Dots & Dashes.

As a young man of 17 years old, I attended Sprott Shaw Radio School in Vancouver British Columbia. The day started with one hour of typing, which proved its great worth to me over the years. From the typing room I went to classroom, which was set up with telegraph keys and sounders and was given instruction by a gentleman named Cliff Jones.

Mr. Jones had a background working as a train dispatcher in California. His class went on to about 16:00 (4:00 o'clock), with a break for lunch. After completing this three months radio school, I returned home to learn the book work needed to become an Agent Operator.

On June 29, 1950 I was hired as an Assistant Agent at Pelly Saskatchewan, where I worked with the Agent, Ray Dawson, for several months. Then in April 1951, I was called into Winnipeg where I was given a medical and telegraphy proficiency test. I was then promoted to Operator and on May 21, 1950 I relieved the agent at Wekusko, Manitoba, which at that time was accessed only by rail.

From Wekusko, I was sent to Churchill Manitoba and worked as one of the operators in that station. Then in 1954, I bid for a position in the "WI" office in Winnipeg Manitoba. This is where my skills in telegraphy greatly improved as I worked the night shift.

On the night shift, we were required to copy the form 999 from various locations across western Canada. This required that we learn by heart

the positions on the form 999, where we were to insert the numbers sent to me by the operator at the other end of the wire. Some of these operators were very good and they were fast. I used to work with an operator in Saskatoon Saskatchewan who signed himself as "Q."

While I was still working for the Canadian National Railways from 1959 to 1963, I attended the University of Alberta in Edmonton. The jobs that I worked allowed me time to study while at work, but the days were long. I was in classes during the day and then at 16:00 I would work the Telegraph Operator's job until midnight.

Then I was hired to teach an elementary class of grade fives. As I progressed, I finally learned how to be an Industrial Education teacher, teaching junior high students in Calgary. Finally, I went to Northern Alberta to a fly-in community called Fort Chipewyan Alberta. At that location I taught Industrial Education to the native children for five years. At that time, age 67 and with failing health, I returned to my home in Calgary, where I remain today.

The Native children were good in so many ways but they had their own schedule. You could not expect much work from then on Monday. But Tuesdays through Thursday were good days and these children were extra good at artistic talents. On Friday, not much work was done because they were preparing for the weekend frivolities.

I've lived a good life. ~Don Young

Dots & Dashes

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The Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Morse Telegraph Club

Landline Morse is Alive and well!

Dots & Dashes newsletter
The Ace Holman national telegraph office & hub
Internet Telegraphy Railroad Telegraphy
Morse Telegraph demonstration

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

www.morsetelegraphclub.org



Sidewire

Comments from the
Editor of *Dots & Dashes*

By **Jim Wilson**



During our unusually long and cold winter, we wondered if SPRING would ever return. Hurray, the flowers are again blooming, the birds are again singing, and your spring issue of *Dots & Dashes* has arrived.

Life is good.

Our new MTC International Secretary-Treasurer, Richard Williams, has taken the initiative to give you more for your money. If you pay for a paper copy of *Dots & Dashes*, Richard now has you also receiving a virtual electronic copy. The electronic copy will likely beat the snail mail copy to your house. But when the paper copy arrives, you will have a real, hold it in your hands, paper copy to read and study without the hassle of sitting in front of your computer. So, you will now receive two for the price of one. Lucky you.

The design of that 175th anniversary commemorative U.S. postage stamp is making progress. Read the letter on page 6 dated January 22nd. Recall that the electric telegraph was first demonstrated to the U.S. Congress on May 24, 1844.

I am advised that the unveiling of this stamp will include a presentation at a historically significant site such as Morristown, New Jersey - where Samuel Morse and Alfred Vail invented the electric telegraph, or at Locust Grove in Poughkeepsie, New York - home of "Finney" Morse. When this new postage stamp becomes available in May 2019, I suggest you go buy a bunch of them!

So, the year 2019 will include some fun things to look forward to. Meanwhile, keep those sounders clicking for the public as you tell them about the invention that started the worldwide revolution in communications.

Jim Wilson

President's Line

Jim Wades, President
Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.



The loss of institutional memory is an issue all of us should be aware of. As we lose members to the ravages of time, many of their memories disappear with them. Likewise, documents, photos and other ephemera that document the history of telegraphy and the telegraph industry likewise disappear.

Recently, I was sorting through some chapter records that were turned into the Grand Chapter upon the death of the former secretary and the dissolution of the chapter. Inside were some very useful files including lists of Union Pacific office calls for various divisions dating from over 100-years ago, old issues of *Dots & Dashes* and various correspondence from members dating to the early 1960s.

One could imagine an overwhelmed spouse or grown child with his own worries and responsibilities looking into a file cabinet, taking a quick look and sending these items straight to the dumpster.

While it's not very organized, MTC does maintain a storage unit that is used to keep instruments for use in museum exhibits as well as old records, photographs and the like. Your International President has it somewhat organized and, over the coming year, he hopes to organize these records into an archive for use by future researchers. Ideally, some of the better documents and photos will be digitized for use in *Dots & Dashes* or for use as reference material on our web page.

Make some arrangements today to ensure that historical documents, instruments or similar ephemera are preserved for future generations. Talk to your children. Place historical documents in photos in a special place and label how you want them to be donated or used upon your passing.

We all have history to share. Let's make sure it lives beyond us.

Web Page

We now have a new web master. Our thanks to Chip Morgan for taking on the task. The web page may be absent for a time as we transition to a new hosting service and give the web page a fresh look. The goal, of course, is to have the foremost source of telegraph history on the web.

I am keeping this President's Line short to make formatting this issue easier. It's arriving a bit late due to a wide variety of responsibilities taking precedent.

More news on a variety of fronts will appear in the next issue of *Dots & Dashes*.

73 to all!

TELEGRAPH CORDLESS JACK BOX

by J. Chris Hausler

It has come to my attention that some members of the MTC, particularly younger members who may never have worked the job of land line telegraph operator, might not be aware of this particular piece of technology, the telegraph cordless jack box. Cordless jack boxes were employed in many telegraph offices to allow the telegraph operator to simultaneously monitor multiple wires and to be able to quickly select any one of those wires with which to work. In a railway way station you might have a separate order wire solely for train order work, a message wire for other railroad work and a commercial wire for commercial telegrams although there were also many other ways of configuring telegraph wires.

We've probably all used corded jacks for headphones, radiotelegraph keys and the like. These, however, all frequently use the two or three conductor quarter inch phone plug and, of course, there is a cord coming out of the back of the plug to provide the electrical connections to whatever device is attached to that plug. Although the same size and shape as a quarter inch phone plug, there is no electrical cord coming out of the back of a cordless plug. What's more, the metal plug itself is just a single piece of brass, with no separate contacts like the tips, rings and sleeves of corded plugs.

Pictured are a pair of 385D three wire telegraph cordless jack boxes from my collection. Interestingly neither of these boxes were ever put into service, they are new old stock and I found both of them on eBay within a month of each other. Earlier I had acquired other cordless jack boxes but they were all very much used and abused and frequently had different jacks installed in them than when original. This likely happened as lines were converted from telegraph to telephone use. Unfortunately, the switching jacks needed for telegraph use are more complex than the bridging jacks needed for telephone use.

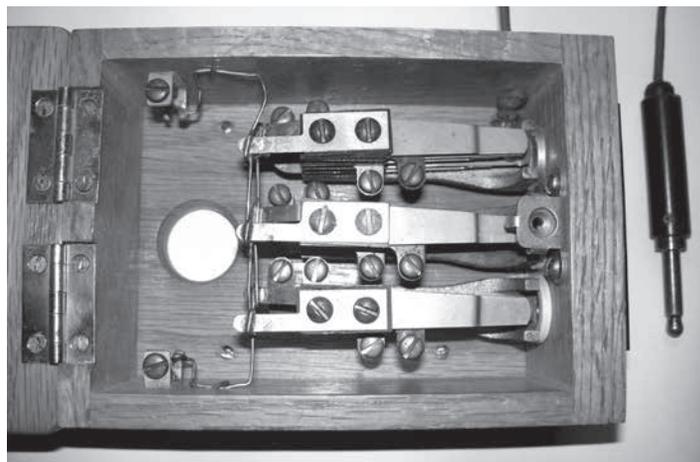
From the photo it appears that the one plug which was provided with each box is connected to it by a cord but this cord is just a heavy string, there is no electrical connection through it. You only got one cordless plug with a box because if



you plugged more than one into a box at the same time it would short the telegraph wires together causing all sorts of havoc. Having only one plug

assured that this didn't occur. However, if your cordless plug happened to roll away and fall off the desk and through that small hole in the floor you were in big trouble, so the string kept that from happening. The string, however, appears to be a late development due to such experience as also in the picture are a couple of earlier cordless plugs from my collection with no strings attached.

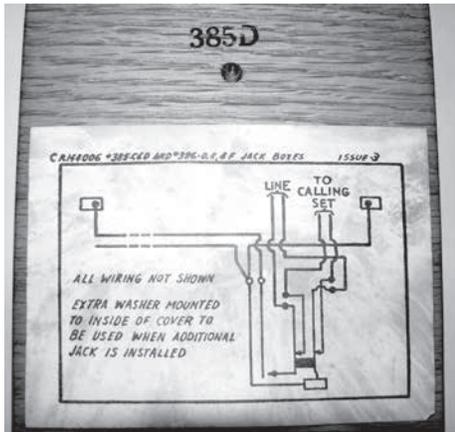
Cordless jacks acted as switches and there were many different jack types depending on what was being switched. Some were used for switching telephone lines, others, like the ones shown in the photo showing the inside of one of the boxes, for telegraph lines. Note where the string is tied off just inside the right front side of the box. Cordless jack boxes of this vintage were commercially produced in different sizes, the three line (the 385) as shown and a six line (the 386) but I've also come in contact with a four line shown in the AWA set-up below. The 385 and 386 could be purchased without all the jacks installed for smaller



installations. The D suffix on the 385D box shown in the photo indicated a 3 wire telegraph box with all three jacks installed.

The three and six line telegraph version of the jack boxes had Western Electric No. 224 jacks installed. The W. E. 224 jack is a double pole double throw switch and the boxes were wired as shown in the photo of the wiring diagram pasted on the inside

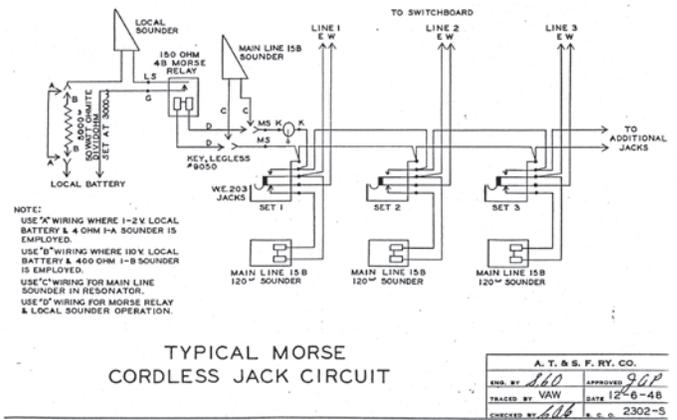
top of one of the boxes. Just one jack is shown in the diagram for clarity. The two wire ends of a telegraph line coming from the peg or other type switchboard in the office would be connected



to the two common terminals of a 224 jack. The two back (normally closed) contacts would be connected out to the calling set dedicated to that telegraph line. This would typically be just a main line sounder. It is called a calling set because even when that wire wasn't selected with the jack box, the operator could still hear his office call on that calling sounder indicating he was wanted on that wire.

When a cordless plug was placed in a jack it would switch that jack to its pair of front (normally open) contacts. In the telegraph jack box, one front contact from each of the jacks is wired together into one buss and the other from each jack into a second buss. A wire would then be run from each of the two buses out to the working set in the office which would have a telegraph key in its circuit and either another main line sounder or more likely a main line relay driving a local sounder. Thus by putting a cordless plug into a specific jack, the telegraph operator could switch that wire from its calling set to the buss and thus to the working set in the office. The operator could then work the selected wire.

Not all installations used this approach to selecting telegraph lines and even when it was used some companies would just buy the individual jacks and plugs and wire up their own installations rather than use the commercially produced jack boxes. For telegraph use, again, the W. E. 224 was frequently used, but W. E. 203 jacks were also

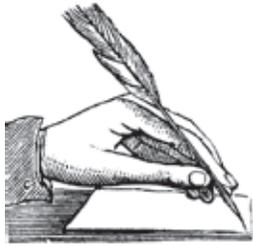


used by leaving one side of the connection to the calling set in common. This is shown in the Santa Fe Railway schematic diagram describing such a configuration.

Early in 2017 I completed the wiring and set-up of a four wire cordless jack box equipped telegraph desk at the AWA museum. It used a commercially manufactured four wire box with W.E. 203 jacks in it. I operated from this desk as shown in the photo for Morse Day 2017. Two of the four wires are connected to the Internet via MorseKOB interfaces. As you can also see from the photo, the four calling sounders (three 15-B's and a 15-C) and the working set main line relay are mounted on a small shelf above and to the back of the desk with the jack box on the right side of the desk with wire 1 selected.



Should you find or have a jack box with either of these types of jacks installed and want to actually use it but not have a cordless plug, you can use the commonly available two contact quarter inch phone plug in its place by just shorting together the two contacts within the handle of the phone plug. Happy multi-wire telegraphing!



Letters to the Editor

January 16th

You should find this article interesting reading. I have a book with photos about John D. Speckle's *Impossible Railroad* and I have an old timetable from the past when the Railroad had passenger service. Read this article on page 8

Richard Williams

January 22nd

Thank you for your letter to the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee expressing support for the issuance of a commemorative stamp honoring Samuel F. B. Morse.

I am pleased to inform you that this proposal will be submitted for review and consideration before the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee. The Committee is responsible for reviewing stamp proposals and making recommendations to the Postmaster General.

Each year the Postal Service receives thousands of letters suggesting hundreds of different topics for new stamps. The Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee was established in 1957 to review all suggestions and make recommendations to the Postmaster General. Committee recommendations are based on national interest, historical perspective and other criteria as outlined at: <http://about.usps.com/who-we-are/csac/criteria.htm>.

We appreciate your interest in our stamp program.

*Sincerely,
William J. Gicker,
Manager of Stamp Development*

February 6th

My grandfather could telegraph, as he worked his entire career in a bank in Orange, Texas, where there was a private line between businesses in the town, from the late 1800's until he retired around 1955. He gave me what he still had of his old telegraph equipment: two 20 Ohm sounders, a typical relay, a Tillotson box relay that never had a key, a KOB missing its key, and a legless double rod straight key. I still have them and some are in use.

Grandfather told me that he had the battery for the line in his apartment but when he got married

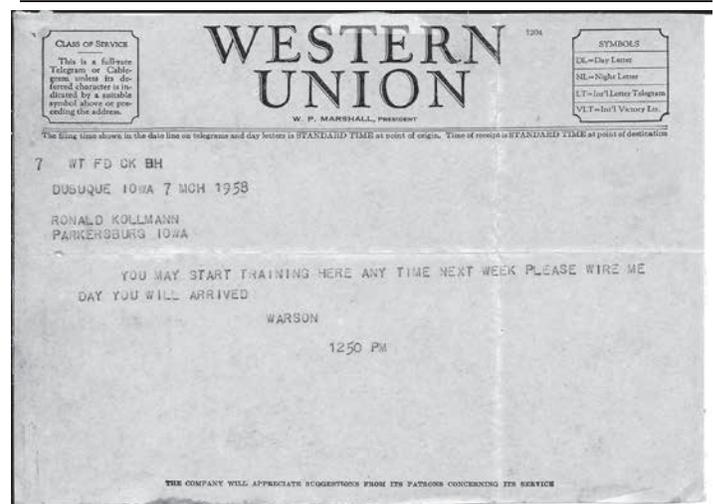
his bride, my grandmother, said the battery had to go. He could copy some pretty fast marine traffic.

When younger, he rolled his cigarettes with Bull Durham tobacco, but when they made him Vice President, they said "Our Vice Presidents do not smoke Bull Durham tobacco." (In the little cloth sack with the tag hanging out of the shirt pocket). So he switched to Prince Albert tobacco, which was acceptable.

Granddad had an enormous collection of the old Prince Albert tobacco cans, the type we stuck behind sounders to change the tone. But, he had them nailed by the lids in trees in his yard with some kind of poison in them to kill ants.

*73,
Steve Bartlett*

February 8th



Western Union accepted me as an employee in 1958. But they did not have a school to train me, so they sent me to Dubuque, Iowa to learn on the job. The manager at the time in Dubuque was Richard Warson. He was told that I was coming and was asked to notify me when it would be convenient for me to come. So he sent a dead head DH wire to me in Parkersburg as to my arrival time. He sent this to Waterloo via teletype. The message went as far as Waterloo, Iowa and from there it was sent by Morse to Parkersburg, the depot for the Illinois Central.

Ron Kollmann

February 11th

Frequently, I find references to Jim Adkins (past MTC President) and Keith LeBaron (past International Secretary) in Dots & Dashes. Lavina Shaw's reminiscences of her 28 years in official MTC positions in the 2017-18 winter edition of Dots & Dashes reflected on her meeting Jim and Keith in Rochelle, Illinois.

Jim Adkins, Keith LeBaron, and Lester Fouke used to put on demonstrations at the Silver Creek and Stephenson Railroad in Freeport, Illinois.

The Silver Creek and Stephenson runs a 1912 Heisler Steam Locomotive on 1.7 miles of track. I've excerpted six minutes from a more extensive video about the Antique Engine Club that contains a typical demonstration done by Jim, Keith, and Lester whenever the train was running. You can watch this video at: <http://youTube/RvbfS0ONT4g>. In this link, 0 is the letter O, 0 is the number zero. Or go to YouTube and search for Silver Creek and Stephenson Morse code demonstration. Enjoy this bit of history preserved by MTC members.

73,
Norm Aulabaugh

March 3rd

Interfacing to MorseKOB is easy. The simplest is a sounder driver circuit, or if you are happy with

just using the key and hearing the clicks with your computer's sound system, just the key and a couple wires to a serial port or to a serial-to-USB adapter if your computer doesn't have a serial port. The only problem with the sounder driver approach is that it uses separate loops for the key and sounder. But, that is what I used for several years and is documented on: <http:morsekob.org/interface.htm>. My collecting activities have more or less focused on KOB's the last several years and since then I have used the loop circuit. Instead of building my own, I just ordered them from Chip's company. [See the Morgan's Elk Creek Enterprises want ad in this issue.] I ordered two for me and then later two for the Antique Wireless Association (AWA) Museum telegraph desk that I put together.

These work great and can run a KOB. The key and sounder are in the same loop as was a classic telegraph set-up. All you need to provide is loop power and current limiting resistance, which also reduces the inductive time constant. For instruments of the typical main line resistance of 100 to 150 Ohm's I just use a 12 volt DC wall wart in series with a 150 Ohm 2 watt carbon resistor. Chip's interface is described here: <https://sites.google.com/site/morsekob/interface> and can be ordered from his web site: <http://meceweb.com>.

73,
J. Chris Hausler

FREEZE – YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT

HOW MANY OF US REMEMBER THE ORIENT RAILROAD?

This article is written for us by William Egelston

If you hopped a ride as a stowaway on that train, you had a good chance to meet Mr. Thomas Jefferson Martin, Chief of Railroad Detectives for the Orient Railroad. The enclosed photograph was his personal badge. He was also grandfather of my daughter-in-law, Kay Martin Egelston. Kay asked me to research any information on that railroad.

"Rail;" it all started in 1900 by American Road Entrepreneur, Arthur Edward Stillwell, predecessor to Chihuahua Pacific Railroad in Mexico, who intended to reach the Pacific Ocean at Topolobampo, Sinaloa.

Its successor was the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. Track gage was 4 feet, 8 ½ inches,

which was the standard railroad track gage in the United States. It was controlled by Edward Hawley and Primary shops in Fairview. It was restored in Wichita, Kansas in 1912. It went bankrupt a short time thereafter.

But in 1912, William T. Kemper found oil under the tracks. Talk about blind luck! It was reorganized in 1925 and returned to the old name of "The Orient Railroad." In 1928 it was acquired by Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe as to gain access to west Texas oil fields. At the end of 1925 it operated 738 miles on 859 miles of tracks, 220 million net tons miles of freight and 8 million passenger miles.

Now you know!



THE IMPOSSIBLE RAILROAD

WILL CENTURY-OLD RAIL LINE FINALLY THRIVE, DELIVERING BILLIONS IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY?

This article, written by John D. Speckle, is submitted for our reading enjoyment by MTC International Secretary-Treasurer, Richard Williams

In Jacumba Hot Springs, less than a mile from the U.S.-Mexico border, Robert Smith lives in an old stationmaster's house that once serviced the so-called Impossible Railroad, stretching from Imperial County through perilous desert cliffs to the Pacific Coast.

Built by entrepreneur John D. Spreckels roughly a century ago, the 148-mile rail line still partially operates today, moving freight from the city of San Diego into Tijuana and as far east as Tecate.

Smith was hired this summer by Baja California Railroad — the latest company to set its sights on cashing in on a currently inoperable stretch of the railroad known as the desert line.

“This line is always a challenge for the rockslides, sand over tracks, a lot of dry rot in the bridges,” said the 54-year-old diesel mechanic. “There’s a lot of rehabilitation required.”

Driving a pickup equipped with steel guide wheels called a hi-rail, Smith said he regularly chauffeurs the company’s architects and engineers, sometimes U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents, to inspect the 70-mile section of track, which continues north from Tecate across the border into Campo through the rocky hills of Carrizo Gorge and eventually connects in Plaster City with Union Pacific Railroad’s system.

For months, the company has been assessing what it would take to restore and maintain the route, including its 17 tunnels and 57 bridges, many of which need structural repairs. In at least two places, boulders and rocks cover the history-laden tracks.

A Tantalizing Opportunity

Since the days of Spreckels, people have dreamed of running freight through the desert, bypassing Los Angeles and more efficiently connecting the San Diego-Baja California region to eastern markets.

However, everything from fires to floods to prickly politics has plagued the route.

Baja Rail wouldn’t be the first company to attempt to revive the aging desert line, but it could be the most well-funded. At the helm is one of Baja California’s most powerful and politically connected businessmen, the wealthy boxing promoter Fernando Beltrán.

Beltrán and his team have vowed to invest tens of millions of dollars to conquer the treacherous terrain and more efficiently connect manufacturing plants in Tijuana to U.S. markets. Such a feat could provide an economic boost to the region, as well as dramatically reduce the number of trucks that travel every day in San Diego County on Interstate 5.

His team isn’t stacked with railroad experts, though. It’s composed mostly of former owners and operators of Tijuana factories known as maquiladoras. That includes childhood friend Roberto Romandía Tamayo, who oversees day-to-day operations as Baja Rail’s executive director.

“We’re very familiar with the maquiladoras and the needs that they have, and one of them is a train, obviously,” Tamayo said recently at the company’s newly constructed operations headquarters located in Tijuana at the San Ysidro border. “We are very aware that a state without the infrastructure of a train is not an industrial state. That is one of the main issues why we decided to go into this business.”

Technically, the maquiladoras can move goods via rail through San Diego up to the Port of Long Beach and into Los Angeles County. But it would be significantly more expensive than shipping by truck, which they do now. In large part, that’s because the overhead electrical wires used by trolley cars prevent the double-stacking of rail containers.

Industry boosters north of the border are excited about the idea of a cost-effective alternative to moving freight in semi-trucks from the factories, which assemble goods such as Toyota pickups and electronics.

Diesel mechanic Robert Smith walks the Goat Canyon trestle on the railroad line that his employer, Baja California Railroad, is trying to fully resurrect from San Diego to Imperial County



“It would be a game-changer for our region,” said Paola Avila, vice president of international business affairs at the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce. “It would be another border crossing for us to help alleviate our cross-border wait times, which gravely impact commerce.”

Freight trucks queue up daily for hours at the Otay Mesa and Tecate crossings. The delays cost the binational economy roughly \$6 billion and about 51,000 jobs a year, according to San Diego Association of Governments data.

If two-hour processing times at the border for big rigs could be reduced, San Diego County could see annual economic activity increase by as much as \$455 million and 2,400 jobs, according to SANDAG.

For Baja California, the stakes are even higher, with wait-time losses totaling about \$1.3 billion and nearly 7,000 jobs.

Overhauling the desert line, however, is far from a done deal.

A Troubled Past

Since the Mexican-American War from 1846 to 1848, power players in the San Diego region have desired a rail line to eastern states, said Bruce Semelsberger, archivist for the library of the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association.

“As early as two years after statehood, the first attempt was made by merchants in Old Town to bring in a rail line to San Diego,” he said. “That would have been 1852 when they started talking about it.”

By the late 1800s, what would become the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway, or BNSF, would connect San Diego to Los Angeles and to a growing network of rail lines throughout the country.

Still, Spreckels dreamed of connecting San Diego using a rail line through the desert to Yuma to establish a more efficient route to eastern markets. He and his brother, Adolph B. — sons of Claus Spreckels, known as the Sugar King of San Francisco — incorporated the San Diego and Arizona Railway Company in June 1906.

“There had always been rivalries between San

Diego and Los Angeles, and San Diegans, for one thing, were galled at having to go through Los Angeles to get anywhere,” Semelsberger said. “The other part of it is if you could go straight to Yuma, you could save hundreds of miles.”

The Spreckels brothers teamed up with the president of Union Pacific Railroad, Edward Henry Harriman, who wanted to extend his line directly into San Diego.

Harriman had become interested in exploiting the agricultural potential of the region after finishing a job for President Theodore Roosevelt plugging the Colorado River, which had broken through its banks in the Imperial Valley and created what would come to be known as the Salton Sea.

“Spreckels agreed to front for them,” he said. “They were to supply the money, Spreckels was going to supply the name and the fame and the local connections.”

A year after forming the San Diego & Arizona, a groundbreaking ceremony was held on Sept. 7, 1907, in downtown San Diego.

The bad luck started almost immediately as the county fell into depression and funding for the project dried up.

Eventually, the project got back on track, only to have Harriman die in 1909 and the railroad company nix the agreement. Spreckels was disheartened but determined to raise the money to continue.

Then violent flooding in January 1916, including the collapse of Lower Otay Reservoir Dam, damaged the recently constructed tracks, especially along Campo Creek.

A year later, the U.S. entered World War I. While Spreckels was able to navigate bureaucratic red tape triggered by the conflict, labor shortages and an inflated cost for materials slowed progress.

By December 1919, Southern Pacific locomotives were running between San Diego to El Centro, only to be held up a few months later by a major rockslide in Carrizo Gorge and the threat of others.

After Spreckels died in 1926, flash floods and fires would continue to impact the line. In 1932, Spreckels’ heirs sold their share of the company to Union Pacific Railroad.

The renamed San Diego & Arizona Eastern Railway would continue to run on the line, eventually transitioning to passenger service until 1950, when the company filed an application with the California Public Utilities Commission to abandon operations.

“Despite shipping products fairly consistently,

they never made a profit most years,” Semelsberger said. “When you write down all the maintenance costs for operating the railroad and other expenses, it only paid for itself and made a profit for the stockholders a couple of years.”

In 1978, the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System bought the railroad company in restored condition for \$18.1 million. A few years later, freight briefly resumed between San Diego and Plaster City until fires destroyed two bridges on the desert line.

The last time cargo was transported along the desert line was in 2008 when MTS leased the line to private company Carrizo Gorge Railway only to have the route embargoed pending tunnel and bridge rehabilitation.

In 2012, shareholders Charles McHaffie and Dwight Jory seized control of the lease under the name Pacific Imperial Railroad. The company routinely missed deadlines imposed by MTS and racked up lawsuits by investors alleging the company defrauded them. Last year, Pacific Imperial Railroad was thrust into bankruptcy with unsecured debt of more than \$7 million.

McHaffie indicated a willingness to be interviewed for this story but didn’t return a request for comment by press time.

A Needed Nod

In 2012, the Mexican government granted Baja Rail the concession to operate the 44-mile section of the Impossible Railroad between Tijuana and Tecate. Since then, the company said it has invested nearly \$9 million, along with about \$11 million in public matching funds, to upgrade the short line.

Officials with the company have said they’re now ready to spend upwards of another \$60 million to repair the desert line and resume freight operations. If everything goes as planned, they said they’ll also spend an additional \$20 million on a multimodal facility to transfer cargo from trucks to railcars.

“They’re describing the vision I bought into when I came out to run (Pacific Imperial Railroad) and invested in the company,” said David Rohal, a 30-year railroad veteran who invested \$750,000 into the now-bankrupt company.

“Any investment carries the risk of natural disasters, and I don’t know if they have the wherewithal to do it, but there is certainly a commercial opportunity from providing a more efficient route,” he added.

First, Baja Rail wants approval from U.S. Customs and Border Protection in San Diego to build a joint inspection station at the border near Campo. Right now, the company only imports goods from the U.S. through San Ysidro into Tijuana, mostly natural gas and raw materials for the Tecate Brewery in Tecate.

“Customs authorities need to figure out how they’re going to work together,” said Jorge Izquiendo, in charge of strategic planning and communication for Baja Rail. “This needs to be guaranteed for us to start building on the desert line. If we don’t have a crossing, why are we going to build on the line?”

So far, there has been disagreement about where such an inspection station would be located. Baja Rail would like to build it in Mexico just south of the border before the tracks go through a tunnel and head east to Campo.

Customs and Border Protection would like to build the facility in the U.S., according to Baja Rail and transportation officials in San Diego.

“The limiting factor in all this, the thing that has to get done is a customs inspection facility at the border, and that’s probably going to have to be built on the U.S. side of the border,” said Paul Jablonski, executive director of MTS.

“I think that’s a big stumbling block that if we can get over, the path will be clear. But I don’t want to minimize the height of that fence,” he added.

There’s no specific deadline for officials to make a decision, although Baja Rail officials have said they plan to have details ironed out by summer with freight running from Tijuana to Plaster City by 2020.

joshua.smith@sduiontribune.com

MORSE DAY INVITATION TO MTC MEMBERS

Morse Telegraph Club members and their friends are invited on Morse Day – April 28th, to attend the annual celebration at the Railway Postal Museum in Boyce, Virginia. This occasion celebrates Samuel F. B. Morse’s birthday and recognizes the contributions that telegraphy made to society for more than a century.

Beginning in 1844, the telegraph was the first “Information Superhighway,” over which messages moved more swiftly than the fastest transportation conveyances of that time. The Boyce railroad depot was a Western Union office between 1913 and 1958, as well as a train order office for railroad operations. Telegraphic communications were integral to both activities.

For a Saturday afternoon, April 28th, the chatter of sounders will once again reverberate within the agent’s office walls. You are invited to meet Morse operators working the wires, and you are invited to sit down in the operator’s chair and send a few messages.

A pictorial postmark commemorating the event is expected to be approved. This was designed by Chip Morgan, a prominent telegraph historian, who is also proficient with a Vibroplex key. Donna

Richardson, Boyce’s Postmaster, will postmark cards or letters with the special cancellation. These can be mailed or handed back as souvenirs. Post cards of the Boyce depot will be available for sale, or you can bring your own items for postmarking.

Boyce is seven miles from Winchester, Virginia. The address for GPS directions is 117 East Main Street, 22620. This event will be held between 1 and 4 PM. There will also be a complimentary cook-out with beef burgers, hot dogs, buns, condiments, and sodas. Bring your own sides or items to grill for yourself or to share. Alcoholic beverages are not allowed on the depot grounds and the Norfolk & Western Railway “Rule G” will be enforced.

If you are unable to attend this event, feel free to visit on another date. The depot is open most Saturdays between 11 AM and 3 PM. Other times and days can be arranged with sufficient advance notice. Write to 117 East Main Street, Boyce, VA 22620-9639 or send your email message to brdf@railwaymailservicelibrary.org. A daytime cellular telephone number is 571 379-3409. This invitation is issued to you by Dr. Frank Scheer.

CHAPTER NEWS

Florida FX Chapter

OCTOBER 17, 2017

Scare Crow festival at the Pioneer Florida Museum at Dade City. Turnout at the restored Trilby Depot on the museum grounds was a bit meager on this occasion, reported member Ray Garafano, the Operator/Agent on duty. However those who did visit the depot experienced the telegraph in operation and heard about how it was used so successfully by the railroads of North America.

OCTOBER 21, 2017

Steampunk Industrial Show at Mt. Dora. Member Don Andrus had the Chapter's Mini-Telegraph office set up at this show, along with and connected to a Victorian looking Steampunk fantasy machine which appeared to receive and then repeat telegraph messages using steam generated power. A mechanical hand operating a telegraph key sent the received messages onto the mini-telegraph office, much to the delight and fascination of those who enjoy watching unusual mechanical contrivances in operation. Visitors also learned of the role of the telegraph in the development of the railroad system of the United States and Canada.

OCTOBER 28, 2017

Annual Jubilee at Pinellas County's Heritage Village. Chapter member's Don Andrus and Ray Garafano manned the Sulphur Spring depot, providing telegraph demonstrations and answering questions to a continuous stream of interested visitors to the depot. This annual event always draws a good turnout and this day was no exception.

Visitors also had the opportunity to try their hand at sending American Morse code on the antique telegraph instruments in the depot.

NOVEMBER 4, 2017

Members Don Andrus spent the day as the telegraph operator at the Pierson Depot on the grounds of the Volusia County Pioneer Arts Settlement. An exceptionally heavy turnout all day kept the depot with its large operating model train display of local towns in the area and the 'on duty' telegrapher busy. Many visitors had never seen telegraph instruments before and were amazed to learn that such technology existed well before electricity became common in homes and businesses.

NOVEMBER 6, 2017

Members Don Andrus and Clyde Francis met with a representative of the Florida RR, a flourishing tourist line operating near Sarasota, Florida, regarding the upgrading of the telegraph installation we installed earlier in the year at the Willow depot. The up-grade will enhance the depot's installation, adding additional instruments that will allow visitors to try their hand at sending a bit of American Morse code.

NOVEMBER 18-19, 2017

The telegraph display and presentation were once again a part of the Old Florida Festival in Naples, Florida. Morse Telegraph Club, Florida Chapter, president Robert Feeney and his father, member John Feeney, had the sounder clicking away at the annual event. The well attended festival is a great venue held at the Collier County Museum every year. Visitors enjoyed hearing the history of the telegraph and its contribution to the world of communication. The key, sounder, and replica batteries along with the Morse code charts and information about Morse's invention and our club was shared with hundreds of visitors.

DECEMBER 9TH, 2017

At the annual Florida Christmas Remembered event at Barberville - Despite a low turnout due to the un-seasonably cool weather, members Clyde Francis, Don Andrus & Ted the telegraphing Teddy Bear, entertained and sent Santa-grams for a number of children at this annual event. No unusual requests for Santa this year. More classic items like dolls and roller skates prevailed, although one young man did ask Santa for a 'death star'. Could this be a sign? The large operating model train layout and the warmth of a wood fire in the depot's pot belly stove kept some visitors returning for an occasional warm up.

FEBRUARY 3, 2018

Chapter members Clyde Francis and Don Andrus manned the Trilby depot's telegraph bay for the annual Farm & Quilt show featuring the Southern Draft Horse competition. Turn out at the depot was moderate, but steady, providing for a most enjoyable and relaxed day. and provided ample time to respond to the questions of visitors about the role of the telegraph in the history of the North American continent.

CHAPTER NEWS *cont.*

FEBRUARY 9-11, 2018

The historic use of Morse, both American and Continental, was again on display at the Orlando Hamcation, now amateur radio's third largest annual convention. For three days the MTC was represented by members of the Florida Chapter. John and Robert Feeney had a land line Morse demonstration set up in the 'Swaps' building, and Don Andrus had his Titanic Wireless room display operating in the Commercial building. Chapter members were in appropriate costume and, as expected, drew considerable attention from 'hoards' of hams who find the history of Morse, both land line and wireless, of particular interest.

FEBRUARY 12, 2018

The Florida Chapter continued to work with the Florida Railroad (an up and coming preserved tourist line near Sarasota, FL) with the donation of additional telegraph equipment, augmenting the Chapter's previously donated American Morse telegraph working setup installed at the Willow Depot's telegraph bay. Chapter member's Clyde Francis and Don Andrus made this donation of time and materials to further enhance the depot/museum's operations.

The chapter later received a letter from the museum's director expressing its gratitude for the donations and for arranging the permanent interactive display in the reconstructed depot.

FEBRUARY 25, 2018

Chapter members Clyde Francis and Don Andrus were in the old ACL Trilby, Florida depot, now located on the grounds of the Pioneer Florida Museum, Dade City, Florida where they entertained and educated

visitors in attendance at a reenactment of a Civil War skirmish near that location. Visitors to the depot saw demonstrations of both the Trilby depot's telegraph set up as well as a display of operational Civil War era telegraph instruments, which included an actual wire tapping demonstration that never failed to impress.

Washington-Baltimore WA Chapter

During the annual "Frostfest" in Richmond, Virginia on February 3rd, four folks manned the Morse Telegraph Club booth. Sunny weather brought out a full house, hundreds of ham radio operators. In fact, Frostfest was originally sold out, so the MTC WA Chapter was fortunate to be one of the exhibitors at Frostfest.

Hundreds of people saw our MTC exhibit. Some of them took home with them sample copies of Dots & Dashes with application forms enclosed, and some of the attendees chatted with our four exhibitors: President of the WA chapter, Hubert Jewell, Jr., his son Buz Jewell, his nephew, Dave Corter, and WA Secretary-Treasurer Jim Wilson. We got at least one new member during this event.



SCIENTIST WAS KEY IN DEVELOPMENT OF VOLTAGE STANDARDS

We all know that voltage was extremely important in telegraph communications and is critical in modern electronics devices. The scientist who developed a precise and unchanging standard for the magnitude of the volt, Frances Lloyd, age 94, just became a Silent Key on March 23, 2018. Her standard volt makes it possible for a volt in one laboratory, one country, or one computer to be exactly the same.

Working at the National Institute of Standards and Technology's laboratories in Boulder, Colorado from

1977 to 1989, Frances was a key member of a team that developed what is sometimes called the reference volt.

Lloyd, who received a master's degree in physics from the University of Virginia in 1948, started working at NIST lab in 1977. She was a member of the superconducting electronics group that developed the reference volt equipment. She took that design and turned it into an integrated circuit chip.

Thanks to Washington Post writer Martin Weil for this interesting information.

WEATHER BY WIRE

by J. Chris Hausler

The weather has always been important to people because of the impacts, both positive and negative, that it can have on their lives and occupations. Both U. S. presidents George Washington and Thomas Jefferson made and recorded regular weather observations. Washington's last one was made, and recorded in his diary, the day before he died. However there was no effective way of communicating and coordinating weather data until the advent of the Morse telegraph.

Within a few years of Morse's demonstration line between Washington and Baltimore, the Smithsonian Institution, in 1849, started supplying weather instruments to the telegraph companies and by 1860 there were about 500 observation posts established, however this effort was then interrupted by the Civil War. Finally in 1870 a by a joint congressional resolution signed by President Grant the Weather Bureau of the United States was established within the U. S. Army. This led to not only better coordinated weather reporting but early attempts at scientific weather forecasting. In 1890, this service was transferred to civilian operation within the Department of Agriculture and was renamed the U. S. Weather Bureau, the telegraph being the principal means of data collection and dissemination.

As various technologies advanced, the data collection, coordination, forecasting abilities and services provided by the Weather Bureau expanded. In 1928, teletypes replaced the telegraph and telephone for most weather data handling. In 1954, starting with an IBM 701, computers were used to assist in the analysis and forecasting effort. In 1970, the Weather Bureau was renamed the National Weather Service and is now part of NOAA. The services provided and the technologies used by the NWS continue to expand to the present day. The use of satellites and ground based Doppler radars along with massive computer networks is now commonplace with further advancements on the way.

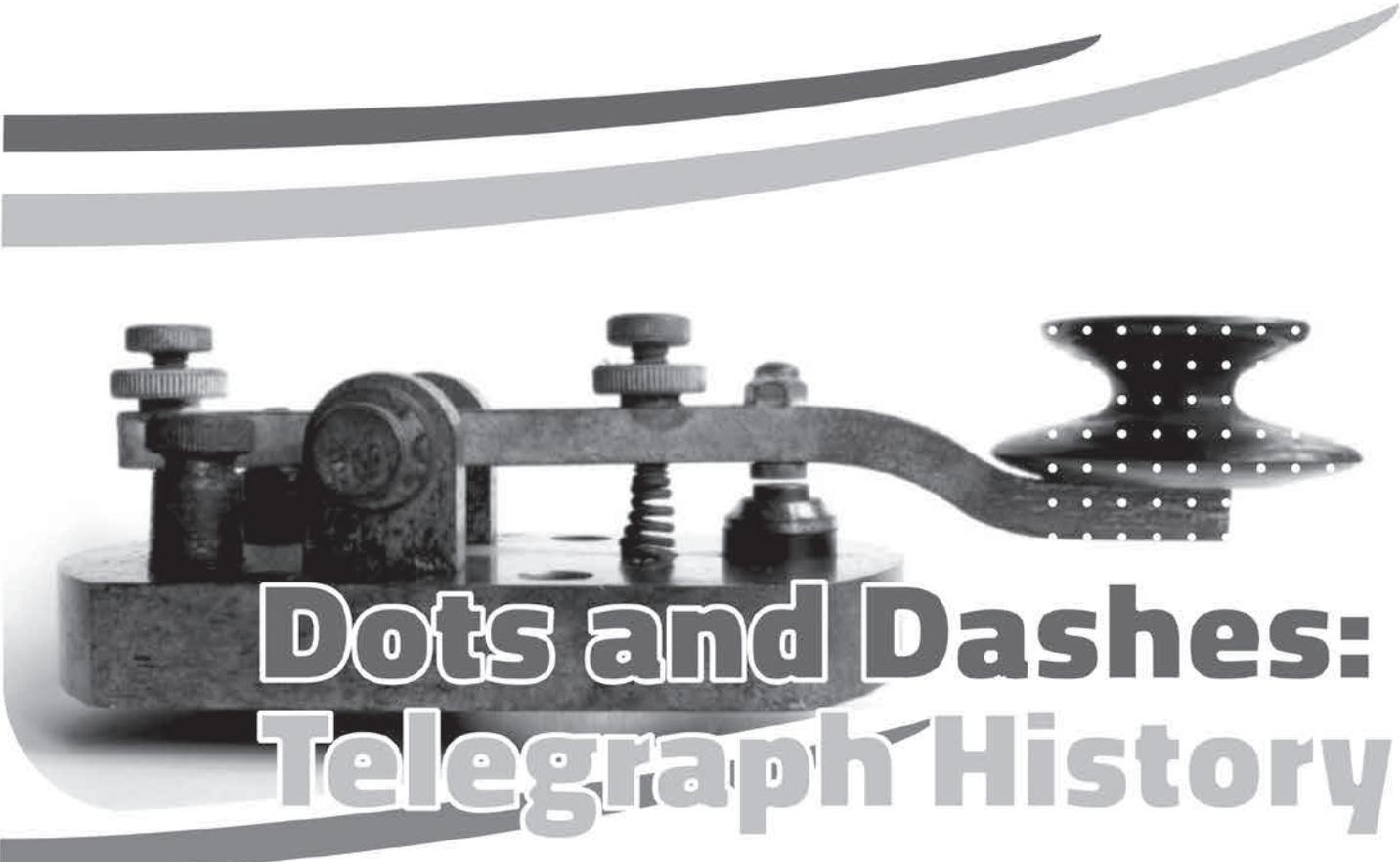
But, as members of the MTC you might be amused to know that weather data and forecasts are once again available by telegraph. Thanks to MTC member and creator of the MorseKOB system, Les Kerr, you can request the weather data

for any NWS reporting station by telegraph. The first thing you need to know is the four character station code for the weather reporting station nearest your desired location. To determine this go to <http://www.weather.gov/> and enter the location in the search box in upper left part of the page. The station code will then appear within parentheses below the line reading "Current conditions at" on the left side of the resulting page a little down from the top.

Now, of course, you need to start up your copy of the MorseKOB program and connect it to the KOB weather service wire, 106. Then, open the circuit with your telegraph key and send the letter 'I' followed by your office call followed by "WX" (shorthand for "weather") followed by the four character station code about which you wish to hear, and then close your key. As shown in the screen image, as I live near Rochester, NY and my office call is "VE" I sent the following: "I VE WX KROC" and it responded as you see.

Now it requires that you send your request using reasonably clearly sent Morse and in the correct format. It tries but it is not great at decoding poorly sent Morse or if the format of your request is incorrect. If it understands your request, in responding it will try and match your sending speed within reason. If it doesn't understand your request, for example I have a habit of sending the letters WX sort of as a prosign, too close together, you will get a telegraphed error response. If the format is correct and understood but it cannot find or understand the station code you sent, it will respond with "WX <code> UNKNOWN".

If your request is successfully understood, it will respond with "WEATHER FOR <station name> =". This will be followed by a report of current conditions and then a forecast. There are occasions when no data is available at all or the current conditions or the forecast is unavailable. It will give you what it does have and then report that the rest is unavailable or missing. If this happens, just try again later. Of course, you don't have to limit yourself to your immediate area. If you're going on a vacation and want to see the weather there or just want to see what the weather is doing at aunt Maude's, it will respond with the data for any valid reporting station. Enjoy!



Dots and Dashes: Telegraph History

Saturday

April 7

2:00-3:30pm

YDL-WHITTAKER
5577 Whittaker Road

QUESTIONS?

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*Help us celebrate the
birthday of Samuel Morse
with Al Skornicka*

Learn about the history of the telegraph and create your own Morse code message using telegraph sounders and keys. Join Al Skornicka, chapter officer of the Morse Telegraph Club, Thomas A. Edison Memorial Chapter, for this family-friendly program.

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—askWhy—

LINCOLN RETURNS TO THE TELEGRAPH OFFICE

*Written by former Dots & Dashes Editor John Barrows,
this article is reprinted from the winter 2000-2001 issue of Dots & Dashes*

President Abraham Lincoln, as the Civil War progressed, was hungry for news from the front...what was happening, were were the troops...what his generals were doing. To keep informed, Lincoln spent a great deal of time during the Civil War where the action was, at the War Department, where through nimble fingers of a host of talented telegraphers, he had a window on the War.

A little bit of history was brought to life during November, 2000 in Washington, D.C. as the Washington-Baltimore WA Chapter of the Morse telegraph Club, working with the German Embassy staff, the Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum, Claude Moore Park and the Signal Corps Association Re-enactors Division, worked to recreate a historical scene, set just before the battle of Gettysburg in 1863.

With MTC members at the former ambassador's residence at the German Embassy (which has a very good resemblance to the now long-gone War Department building) at the Heritage Farm Museum, the days of Lincoln's telegraph office were recreated.

Although complicated electronics at the embassy caused problems, a circuit was finally established and the connection established, just like it was 155 years earlier.

Gerd Buchsteiner, of the German Embassy, helped to make arrangements there. A Civil War enthusiast, he was also a new member of MTC.

Although turnout from telegraphers was light,

it was enough to give a good representation, said organizer Walt Mathers. In addition to Mathers, and WA Chapter secretary Jim Wilson, telegraphers came from Virginia, Minnesota and Montana. The Jewell brothers, Ballard and Herbert, held down one end of the wire, with John Barrows and Bill Marshall at the other end. The next day they switched places. Two other MTC members had attempted to take part but were unable to do so: Bob Hibbard and Gren Schrader.

At Loudon Park the event was held in the original farm house where General John Reynolds and his staff planned their part in the Gettysburg campaign. Signal flags were also used to demonstrate that part of the signaling effort.

The period equipment used in the telegraph hook up was originally built by MTC member Ed Trump of Fairbanks, Alaska, to be used in similar demonstrations.

Mathers and Wilson were excellent hosts for the event, and arranged a number of tours and activities for those attending. Mathers commented that yet another Civil War reenactment was being planned for the coming year, 2001.

Marcus Harton, coordinating producer/broadcasting, of the Freedom Forum's Newseum in Washington, D.C., and ham radio operator NZ4E, arranged for a cameraman to tape much of the "Lincoln in the Telegraph Office" scene at the German Embassy. This video was then routinely shown as part of a display titled "The Telegraph Shrinks a Vast Nation."

Happy 91st Birthday!

Former International Secretary-Treasurer Cindy Galyen wishes a special Happy Birthday to MTC member Seth Grimes in Tyler, Texas. Seth will celebrate his 91st birthday on May 20, 2018. Cindy notes that Seth keeps in touch regularly with her.

DID YOU KNOW?

This article is submitted for our reading amusement by David Cisco of Birmingham, Alabama

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

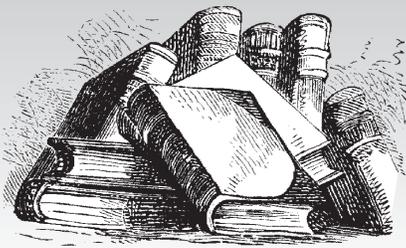
East. It was a huge crate of pocket watches. No one ever came to claim them. So Richard sent a telegram to the manufacturer and asked them what they wanted to do with the watches. The manufacturer didn't want to pay the freight back, so they wired Richard to see if he could sell them. So Richard did. He sent a wire to every agent in the system asking them if they wanted a cheap, but good, pocket watch. He sold the entire case in less than two days and at a handsome profit. That started it all. He ordered more watches from the watch company and encouraged the telegraph operators to set up a display case in the station offering high quality watches for a cheap price to all the travelers. It worked! It didn't take long for the word to spread and, before long, people other than travelers came to the train station to buy watches. Richard became so busy that he had to hire a professional watch maker to help him with the orders. That was Alvah. And the rest is history as they say. The business took off and soon expanded to many other lines of dry goods. Richard and Alvah left the train station and moved their company to Chicago -- and it's still there. YES, IT'S A LITTLE KNOWN FACT that for a while in the 1880's, the biggest watch retailer in the country was at the train station.

It all started with a telegraph operator:
Richard Sears and partner Alvah Roebuck!
Bet You Didn't Know That!

OK, Maybe you did; I didn't!
Now that's History.

Do you know what inventions were attributed to Nikola Tesla?

Nikola Tesla's life spanned from July 10, 1856 to January 7, 1943. He had a reputation of being weird. Tesla's top ten inventions included: 1) alternating electric current, 2) the fluorescent light bulb, 3) detection of x-rays, 4) the invention of radio, 5) remote control, 6) the electric motor, 7) robotics, 8) the laser, 9) wireless communications, and 10) limitless free energy. It is surprising that Tesla did not conceive of the telegraph!



J. Chris Hausler's BOOK & MOVIE REVIEWS



To start out this column I must say that I do not and have never considered myself a model railroader. Yes, I had a Lionel toy train set as a kid and for about 20 years put a loop of HO scale track around my Christmas tree, but I haven't even done that now in several years. So I don't believe any of these activities qualifies me as a modeler. That said I have a number of friends who are active model railroaders and am thus somewhat familiar with the hobby.

Just as there are a number of different scales used in model railroading and most modelers specialize in just one, there are many reasons why folks model railroads and many different ways of doing it. I became aware of one way I had not previously seen when at a job site for the Canadian Pacific Railway in Chicago back in the mid 1990's. The signal engineer there was an N-scale model railroader and invited me to see his layout. This visit introduced me to model railroad "operations". These modelers attempt to run their model railroads in a prototypically correct matter. "Prototype" is the term modelers use to describe the "real railroad".

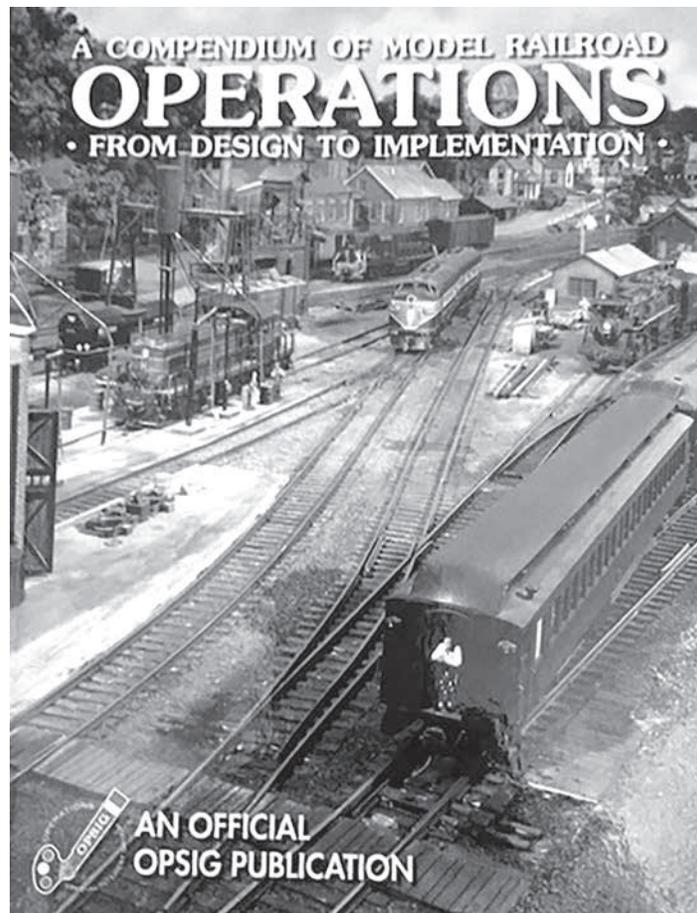
A year or two ago the MTC "wirechief" received an email asking for any photographs of railroad telegraphers actually working the key. The only one I had was that of Lehigh Valley agent/telegrapher Ken Rice, taken at the depot in

Freeville, NY in the late 1950's. This is the same photo published in this column for spring 2013 along with a review of a book of Ken's memoirs. I replied to the email with a copy of the photo along with what particulars I knew about its creation and current owners and thought no more about it. Well, last summer I got a surprise package in

the mail, a rather nice hardbound book about an inch thick with the title, *A Compendium of Model Railroad Operations - from Design to Implementation*. It is published by OpSIG, the Operations Special Interest Group (www.opsig.org). I had not previously known that such a group had even existed.

Even within this specialty of modeling for operations there are many different approaches. The book consists of ten chapters, most by different authors and each chapter addresses some aspect of railroad modeling which must be considered if the modeling is for the purpose of prototypical operations. One

important one is the time frame being represented. Railroad practice, equipment and business changed over time and if you are going to model a specific time frame your layout and equipment should be appropriate. Secondly, just as with the real railroad where tracks and trains are there for the purpose of doing a business, the model layout must be designed so that it supports some



simulated business plan or purpose, otherwise it won't work. Despite a significant reduction in employment over the decades, railroads are still a people business and if you are going to run your model in a prototypical manner you will need crews to operate it and the care and "feeding" of them, even their training, is an important aspect. Then, of course, what kind of operation are you interested in, freight, passenger, some mix and over what kind of territory. Just modeling a yard operation can provide for a lot of simulated but realistic activity.

Once you've decided what kind of operation you want to model, you must in some way control that operation. Two popular ways are electric signaling using "CTC", centralized traffic control, or, of course, time table train order operations. Finally, and getting to the meat of the matter for the MTC, you must communicate this control to the forces operating your trains. Although rarely employed due to the high level of skills required to do so, time table train order operations can, of course, be carried out by telegraph. However, most who are doing TT/TO operations use telephone communications between the dispatcher and train order operators. Chapter 9, titled, "Model Railroad Communications" addresses these communications issues and includes that photo of Ken Rice. I even got my name in print in the caption as the supplier of the photo.

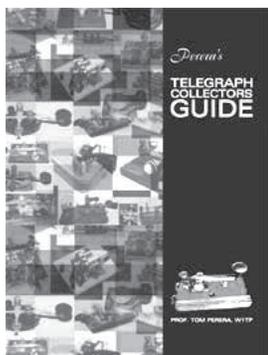
What impressed me the most about this book is the seriousness with which these folks address their hobby, an approach which might best be described as "total immersion". It strongly supports that old cliché, "you only get out of something what you put into it", and this group puts a lot of effort into their hobby. As my exposure to it over 20 years ago showed me, each week or so a group of modelers operate one of their group

member's layouts, going around to a different one each time until all members layouts have been operated, and then starting all over again. Because of the number of people required it is a highly social activity and tends to build firm and long lasting friendships. A number of the tasks involved in running these operating sessions can be complex, but there are some which are less so and thus perfect for introducing new folks to the hobby as well as offering positions to occasional guests. As one who experienced such an introduction, although my task was relatively simple to perform, it was no less significant to the smooth running of the overall session. One is thus made to immediately feel an important part of the operation.

In addition, between operating sessions the owner of each layout must do a fair amount of planning and preparation ahead of time for the next session on his layout, designing different realistic operating plans each time to keep it interesting. This includes setting up trains on both "onstage" and "offstage" areas of the layout as appropriate to the next planned session and arranging appropriate paperwork, waybills, timetables and whatever else is necessary. The book goes into a fair amount of detail about various approaches for accomplishing this activity.

To learn more about this fascinating hobby, buy the book. It can be purchased from OpSIG at the web site listed above.

In researching OpSIG I learned about another book that they have published. Titled, *19 East, Copy 3*, one of its authors is an MTC member. Although apparently currently out of print, I am going to try and obtain a copy of it and if successful you can expect a review of it in an upcoming column.



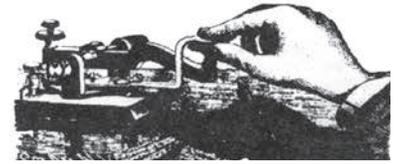
TELEGRAPH COLLECTOR'S GUIDE

Dr. Tom Perera published this book, the Telegraph Collectors Guide, to serve as an inexpensive, portable, and comprehensive source of basic information. The book

also includes reference material for both new and experienced collectors. Tom's book is available for sale on his web site w1tp.com. Additional detailed descriptions with color photographs of over 3,000 telegraph items may be found at Tom's museum website.

“30” SILENT KEYS

News of our brothers and sisters who have closed the key



Milwaukee-Madison MW Chapter



RICHARD W. SATERN, age 91, of Toddville, Iowa passed away on April 4, 2017. Dick was born on March 17, 1926 in Ottosen Iowa. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy at age 17 and served for two years as a Radio Operator in both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

On February 14, 1948

(Valentine's Day), Dick married his sweetheart, Vera Baumgarn. (Vera passed away on April 22, 1993.) They raised four children: Mark Satern of Phoenix, AZ. Miriam Satern of Macomb, IL, Monte Stern of Gasquet, CA, and Mary Sarchett of Marion, IA.

Following his military service, Dick was employed for 35 years as an Agent-Operator for the Rock Island Railroad. On December 5, 1997, he married Margaret DeSousa, adding five step-children to his family.

Dick was a long time active member of the Toddville American Legion and the Otter Creek Lions Club. He was also involved with the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the USS Delta Association, and the Armed Guard Liaisons.

Thanks to Mary Sarchett, Richard's daughter, for this interesting information about her father. Mary adds that the Morse Telegraph Club was one of the clubs that were important in her father's life.

Thanks also to Robert Pluntz, Secretary-Treasurer of the MW Chapter for letting us know of Dick's demise. Robert adds, "He was a long standing member of MTC MW club."

Maple Leaf ON Chapter

DONALD GUSE, age 88, of Oakville, Ontario became a Silent Key on January 25, 2018. He was born on January 10, 1930. Don began his career with the railroad at age 14. (He lied and said he was 16!) His career with the Canadian Pacific Railroad (CPR) lasted 40 years. At the time of his retirement, he worked as the Superintendent of Transportation for the Eastern Region.

Don began his career as a telegraph operator in Schieber Ontario (northern tip of Lake Superior).

As he moved through the ranks, he held various positions in London Ontario and Sudbury Ontario, then he moved to Toronto Ontario. He was very much involved in dispatching, writing rules regulations, and implementing those regulations.

Don was a proud retiree of the CP Rail, a devoted Leaf and Jays fan and a dedicated family man who will be dearly missed and forever be remembered.

Thanks to Donna Van, Donald's daughter, who provided this information about her dad. "He led a wonderful life," she adds. And she comments that her father had a "lovely set-up of the telegraph," asking if a museum might want his telegraph equipment to give it some honor. But she later discovered that one of Don's grandsons expressed interest in working with a Canadian restoration group to display his telegraph equipment.

CHARLES KEITH AUSTIN, age 90, of Huntsville, Ontario passed away on March 26, 2018. Keith and his brother learned and became proficient at Morse code in their early years. Keith classed as an operator on November 22, 1949.

Keith and his brother moved to Huntsville where they obtained jobs with the Canadian National Railroad on the Allendale Subdivision. Keith then worked many years on the spare board covering nearly every station throughout Northern Ontario. In due course, Keith bid for a permanent position at South River, ON, from which he retired in 1988.

Thanks to Don Laycock, Secretary-Treasurer of the Maple Leaf Chapter, for this interesting information. Don adds, "It was an absolute joy listening to and watching these two boys communication in Morse code. Keith will be sadly missed by all his family and friends as well as Maple Leaf Chapter members."

Thomas Edison TD Chapter

LARRY McGRATH, age 77, of Beach City, Ohio, passed away on July 3, 2017. Larry was born on August 20, 1939 in Giouster, Ohio. He became employed by the Timken Company for 35 years. On April 22, 1961 he married Patsy Jean Carl; they recently celebrated 56 years of marriage.

In addition to his MTC activities, Larry was a member of the Beach City First Lutheran Church, the Past Master of Cypress Masonic Lodge #604 in Strasburg, a member of the Cypress Chapter of the Eastern Star and of the Tuscarawas County Art Guild. He was also a licensed amateur radio operator with the call sign KE8LF. As a ham radio operator, Larry enjoyed making radio friends all over the world. He also served as a volunteer docent for the Stark Wilderness Center and was a Beach City fireman and EMT for 26 years. Also during that time, Larry was elected as a village councilman and served as city mayor for eight years.

Thanks to whomever sent me this interesting information.

CD Combs Memorial FN Chapter

HAROLD MAHONEY, age 88, passed away on February 10, 2018. He was born on April 19, 1925 in Geddes, South Dakota. While in high school, Harold learned to telegraph at the Geddes Milwaukee Railroad depot.

Following graduation from Geddes Public High School, he immediately enlisted in the Army. During WWII he served in the European theater with the Military Railroad Service, 744th Railroad Operating Battalion.

While in a convoy heading to England, their troop ship was torpedoed by a German U Boat. But they all survived. In France, they traveled in train transports supporting General Patton's advancement. His unit supported Allied troops and maintained liberation of railroad yards. They also helped to liberate several concentration camps. Harold was discharged from the Army as a First Sergeant. He then served in the Army Railroad Reserve Battalion, with the rank of First Lieutenant.

After his discharge from the Army, Harold began his career with the Milwaukee Railroad. His positions included: Telegraph Operator in various places in Iowa and South Dakota, Dispatcher in Sioux City, Train Master, Special Assistant to the General Manager and Assistant Superintendent. His final position at the time of his retirement in 1981 was Special Project Director, disposing of all Milwaukee Railroad equipment. He was one of a few last employees when the Milwaukee Railroad went bankrupt. Places he worked took Harold from Harlowton, Montana to Milwaukee and Chicago, Illinois. After retirement, he served as a consultant for the Soo Line Railroad through his independent railroad consulting firm. Throughout his life, he also served on the National Defense Executive Reserve for the Interstate Commerce Commission.

In addition to MTC activities, Harold's hobbies

included helping his church, local fish fries, men's club activities, the Sergeant Bluff American Legion Post, and wood working.

Harold and his wife, Colleen, had just celebrated their 63rd wedding anniversary. They raised five children and enjoyed a number of grandchildren.

A longtime member of the Morse Telegraph Club, Harold will be buried in the Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia.

Thanks to Richard Behrens, Secretary-Treasurer of the FN Chapter, for this interesting life story.

Don Watrus RF Chapter

ROBERT C. FINLEY of Goldsby, Oklahoma passed away a year ago in January, 2017.

Thanks to Pat Finley, husband of Robert for this brief notice. Mrs. Finley adds that Bob really enjoyed receiving and reading Dots & Dashes.

Members at Large GC Chapter

TERRY ALEXANDER of Allenwood, Pennsylvania passed away during early 2018.

If anyone knows more about Terry, a longtime MTC member, please let me know. The only notice that I received was his returned copy of the winter issue of Dots & Dashes with the handwritten note "deceased." ~Editor Jim

Emory Mulquin PD Chapter

COY JOSH SAULS of Lyle, Washington recently became a Silent Key. Coy, nicknamed Red, was born in September 8, 1926 in Midland City, Alabama. He moved to the Northwest at the beginning of World War II to work in the shipyards.

When an older brother joined the Navy, Coy joined too. He served in the Navy until his discharge in April, 1946. Then he took advantage of the GI Bill program and went to school to become a railroad telegrapher.

After completion of the railroad telegrapher course, he was hired by the Spokane Portland & Seattle Railroad as a telegrapher. Then he worked various telegrapher jobs on the SP&S. Later he was promoted to Train Dispatcher. "Red" worked in that capacity until his retirement.

"Red" worked with the Morse wire with the Northern Pacific Railroad at Yardley and with the Great Northern Railroad at Hillyard. The rest of the stations had telephones so they did not need any telegraph operators.

After the BN merger took place, "Red" continued as a Train Dispatcher. He developed a reputation as a knowledgeable and an exact dispatcher.

Thanks to Richard Womath for this information. Richard adds, "He left the rest of us with a lot of pleasant memories working with him."

Montana MA Chapter

E. V. SHEPPARD of Lewiston, Montana passed away earlier this year.

Thanks to his son James E. Sheppard of Stanford, Montana for this brief notice.

Jim commented that his father was "a very proud telegrapher."

Vancouver DI Chapter

ROY H. JAMES, age 88, passed away on March 25, 2018 in Burnaby, British Columbia. In the winter months, Roy lived in Burnaby and in the summer he lived on his farm in Kitwanga, BC. Roy was an Operator/Agent for the Canadian National Railways in Kitwanga, and before that he was Freight Agent in Prince Rupert, BC. He was a regular attendee at meeting and did demos for the Vancouver "DI" Chapter.

Thanks to Larina Shaw for his interesting information about Roy.

Sacramento SA Chapter



WILLIAM SKOMOROWSKI, age 91, passed away on February 4, 2018 in Saskatoon, SK.

Bill was born in Wilkie Saskatchewan on March 10, 1926. The son of a railroad man, Bill was raised while living in several railway towns throughout Saskatchewan.

He graduated from high school in Sylvania. He met his future wife, Gladys, at a barn dance. They were married in 1951. Together, they spent several years residing in Wynward and Prince Albert before moving to Saskatoon in 2010.

Bill had a 40 plus year career as a telegraph operator and station agent with the Canadian Pacific Railway, retiring in 1986. Bill was an accomplished bridge player and proudly earned his Silver Life Master Status in October 2017. He was an active member of the Saskatoon Morse telegraph Club and before moving to Saskatoon, was extensively involved with the Prince Albert Lions Club. Bill also enjoyed fishing, golfing, and watching hockey, especially his favorite team -- the Toronto Maple Leafs.

Thanks to Bill's son, Grant, for this information. Grant adds, "Dad enjoyed his time with the club and enjoyed receiving the Dots & Dashes publication."

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS FOR 2018

*Please contact Fred Pylpov and advise him if you are able to attend and provide telegraph demos
Phone 780-475-0976 If not to late please place print this note in Spring Dots & Dashes*

Ukrainian Village Celebration of Spring

Monday, May 21

Children's Days

Friday, June 15 and Monday, June 18

Ukrainian Music Fest and Kalyna Voices

Sunday, June 24

Ukrainian Days

Sunday, August 19

Harvest of the Past

Sunday, September 9

Alberta Railway Museum

Edmonton Victoria Day Weekend May 19-21

Father's Day

June 17

Canada Day Weekend

June 30-July 2

Civic Holiday

August 4-6

Labour Day Weekend

Sept 1-3

Thanksgiving Weekend

Oct 6-8

HOUSE TRACK **Want Ad Section**

For Morse Telegraph Club Members

AVAILABLE: Book *Tales of the American Telegraph*. Issue #3 includes a photo layout. John B. Ryan, 11017 E. Sprague Avenue, Spokane, WA 99206.

WANTED: Re-enactors for Locust Grove, the Samuel Morse Historic Site in Poughkeepsie, NY. Please contact Andrew Stock, Curator of Education and Public Programs at a.stock@morsehistoricsite.org or (845) 454-4500 x13 if you are a Signal Corps re-enactor who may be interested in participation in history of telegraphy, including the annual Civil War weekend.

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

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

AVAILABLE: Book. Hubert Jewell, President of the Washington-Baltimore Chapter, offers us his biography titled, *Working on the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad*. This book is chalked full of facts and descriptions of railroading and of Morse code communications. Hubert's book is available from the RF&P Historical Society, Inc. PO Box 9097, Fredericksburg, VA 22403-9097 or from the web site www.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 Kemptville, Ontario, Canada K0G 1J0, j.gaw@bell.net, or (613) 258-0243

AVAILABLE: Old telegraph and railroad books. For a list of these items, send a SASE to Eugene Wood, 104 Sunset, Madill, OK 73446. (Eugene does not have an email address).

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.

AVAILABLE: RR car passes & trip passes, also old Union (ORT) cards, (some over 100 years old), Postal & Western Union paper items and some WU copied on RR telegram blanks. Send a SASE for a list to Gene Wood, 104 Sunset, Madill, Oklahoma 7346-2051

AVAILABLE: Six "bugs" including 2 Dow and 3 Vibroplex, (one old with no markings), all working well, two sounders – relay, resonator box – many blank, train order forms, defunct Northern Alberta Railways schedules and many other Railroad items. These will make an excellent start or an addition to any museum or personal collection. Price \$500 Canadian. Contact Al Renflesh in White Rock, British Columbia at (604) 531-1082.

AVAILABLE: Book titled *Principles of Telegraphy* by the Department of the Navy. Teletype – Printing Telegraph Systems. Description and

Adjustments, Signal Distribution Test Set Teletype – general description and theory or operation for Model 28 printers. Teletype Adjustments (2) Type Bar Printer Page Printer Models 15 & 20. Maintenance Track Bulletin #248. Parts Transmitter Distributor Bulletin 1041. Tele printer Circuits and Equipment by the U.S. Army. Call Hubert Jewell at (540) 423-1014 and make him an offer on these rare items

WANTED: Old telegraph keys to be restored. I restore vintage telegraph keys from the 1800's to the turn of the century, no cheap or contemporary keys and you must have all of the major parts. No steel lever Triumph keys please. Donate your old key and I will restore it for my own use. If you send a photograph of your key, and you want to sell it to me, let me know the asking price. Edward D. Biter, Jr., 320 Walker Road in Dover, Delaware 19904.

WANTED: A Vaughn automatic telegraph instrument which runs off a reel to reel tape recorder. This gadget causes the sounder to click away with no operator present. Years ago, Sid Vaughn, a professor from Iowa, made a batch of these. If you have one available, I would like to purchase it from you. Donald Mahoney Telephone (608) 444-0898, 1237 North Westfield Road in Madison, WI 53717.

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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
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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:

Richard Williams
International Secretary-Treasurer

PO Box 181591, Coronado, CA 92178
runnerrichard@hotmail.com
(703) 407-7461

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

Ham Radio Web Sites

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

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

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By Jim Davis

