



Dots&Dashes

What

Hath

God

Wrought

The Official Publication of the Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

Vol. 44, Issue No. 1 • Winter 2018-19

MY FIRST TRAIN GOT AWAY!

Russ Nicholls of Huntsville, Ontario shares this story of his first day on a new job

Back on October 10th, 1949, I was contacted by the Chief Operator of the New York Central System in Saint Thomas, Ontario, to go to Tilbury to relieve the midnight to eight Operator for a couple of weeks. I had just qualified with my 15 words-per-minute on telegraph and was now ready to take my first assignment. I must point out to all my readers, that this took place way back in the steam train days, long before diesels were even thought of.

The Chief Operator told me that he'd have a Pere Marquette west-bound freight train stop at Welland to pick me up, then drop me off at Tilbury. I would be riding of course, in the caboose with the Conductor. Everything went off without a hitch.

Upon arrival at Tilbury station I went inside and was greeted by a couple of very friendly lads, who were sitting around the old potbellied stove with a case of 24 beers between them. One of these lads, being the Day Operator, and the other, the 4 to 12 man, the one I would be relieving.

The Day Man said to me, "Russ, being a new man, starting to work on the railroad, there is one thing you must never forget: You'll see a lot and say a little!" I got the message loud and clear. They had both filled me in on the job expectations before starting on my new assignment. I could not wait until midnight!

After midnight, it was so quiet in that old station, you could hear a mouse sneeze. At about 2:00 AM, the train dispatcher called me at the Tilbury office. The loud, shrill ring of that bell scared the devil out of me! He said, "Tilbury, I've got an eastbound freight out of Windsor ahead of

#364 and I want you to run him in there."

No problem, I thought. I knew what to do, just push the calling-on button on the wall and the signal way down the track would authorize him to take the siding at Tilbury. Hey man, this it's the real thing; I'm now a real railroader!

So, I'm anxiously awaiting the arrival of my first train. After about thirty minutes, I spot a tiny speck of light way down the track. The light gets brighter and brighter, and the next thing I see is my first train roaring past Tilbury at full speed, with absolutely no intention of stopping! What do I do now? My first train got away! Will my days as a railroader be numbered?

After much anguish, I decided I had better tell the dispatcher. When I told him what happened, he broke into uncontrollable laughter. He finally sensed my concern and said, "I guess there was one other thing the lads forgot to tell you." He proceeded to explain to me that since back in those days, all railroads utilized steam power to move their passengers and freight. To get steam you had to have an abundant supply of water. New York Central had installed a one mile in length track-pan measuring about 30 inches wide by 12 inches deep, at five locations on the Canadian Division, and Tilbury was one of those locations.

What had happened was the engineer ran over the track pan (mainline) at full speed, scooping up water to fill his tender, then he stopped at the other end and backed into the siding as ordered! He hadn't ignored me after all.

The dispatcher assured me that I was still on their spare board. What a relief!

Dots & Dashes

The official publication of

The Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

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

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

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

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

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

IN THIS ISSUE

ARTICLES

My First Train Got Away!!.....	1
GPS Timing Problem	5
Moon Landing	5
MTC Member Sends Us a Request	12
Progress at the Railway Mail Service Library & Museum.....	14
Biography of a Telegrapher	16
Get on the Wire!! By J. Chris Hausler.....	17-18
From Telegraph to GPS	18
A Look Back By J. Chris Hausler.....	19-20
Emeritus Professor's Textbook Used For 'Hello Morse' Experiment By Erica Jones.....	20-21

IN EVERY ISSUE

Sidewire	3
President's Line.....	3-4
Do You Know?.....	4
Chapter News.....	6-9
Letters To The Editor.....	10-12
Book & Movie Review	13-14
Silent Keys	15
House Track.....	22

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



The coming year 2019 will offer exceptional opportunities for you and me to tell the world about the electric telegraph. Recall that the telegraph was demonstrated to the U.S.

Congress on May 24, 1844. Samuel Morse was at the telegraph key at

the U.S. capitol and Alfred Vail was at the telegraph key thirty miles away at the railroad station in Baltimore, Maryland. This means that the 175th anniversary of that historic event will be here on May 24, 2019.

Please join your chapter activities or become a Lone Ranger by demonstrating the telegraph to various groups this coming year, groups such as the Boy Scouts or your local amateur radio club.

Also, you might arrange a display at your local library. This display could include a key with a sounder, a printed description of the history of the telegraph, a page showing the American Morse code, and a sheet of the new Morse Telegraph U.S. postage stamps which celebrate the 175th anniversary of this great invention.

This WINTER issue is the third issue of *Dots & Dashes* with color photographs. I hope you like the luster paper with the new color photographs. Please send me your color photographs and your historic black & white prints from the past, along with your stories and telegraph news.

The FALL issue of *Dots & Dashes* was mailed out late by our McClung Mailing Service due to an ice storm, which caused a lengthy power failure, leaving as many as 30,000 homes and businesses without power, which caused the delayed mailing. This WINTER issue should arrive on time.

So, keep on tapping out messages for the public so they can see and hear how a telegraph sounds. And follow the advice on page 17 of our MTC International Vice President, J. Chris Hausler, by getting active on the Morse line. 2019 will be our year of the Telegraph!

Jim Wilson

President's Line

Jim Wades, President
Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.



Each year, the Saginaw Valley (Michigan) Amateur Radio Association and the Morse Telegraph Club work in concert to recreate the role of telegraph operator at the "Holidays in the Heart of the City" event. Christmas telegrams, addressed to Santa Claus ("Santagrams"), are transmitted to North Pole, Alaska by way of Fairbanks, giving children, and adults, an opportunity to ask Santa for something special while witnessing a working Morse telegraph circuit in operation. With the decline of passenger rail service in the 1950s, remaining telegraph operations were largely invisible to the public. Therefore, most people alive today have never seen a real telegrapher or real telegraph instruments in use. Such demonstrations give today's generation an opportunity to see a competent operator transmitting traffic at a commercial speeds.

Like operators of years gone by, the volunteer clerks and operators who transmit these messages



occasionally have a special insight into the lives of others. The typical message is, of course, a child's request for a few special toys. Children are fascinated by the telegraph and often ask questions about how the equipment works. They occasionally find the fact that an operator can decode the Morse by ear almost unbelievable. The telegraph adds an air of mystery and seems almost as magical as old Saint Nick himself. The novelty of telegraphy attracts considerable attention in an era dominated by sleek modern devices, many of which are so efficient they lack a "human element."

Out of a stack of santagrams, one can obtain insights into the types of toys that are "hot," such as hoverboards, video games and iPhones. One

also discovers that some toys are timeless, such as barbie dolls, puppies, Legos, that first shotgun or that perennial dream of every little girl.....owning a horse, even if it must be pastured on a small city lot!

Unfortunately, not all requests to Santa reveal a secure and comfortable childhood. Some request the return of an absent parent or simple necessities of life, such as regular meals or better living conditions. Some messages come from adults who are clearly struggling with the trials of life. In a post-industrial city like Saginaw, abandoned by Wall Street in its search of ever greater profits, one finds that many simply dream of a "car that runs," or having one's "bills paid." These are not requests for great wealth or privilege, but just a dream of having one's daily burdens lessened.

A few messages reveal some very difficult or questionable circumstances. During this year's event, a girl handed a letter to one of the message clerks and quickly walked away before questions could be asked. The letter reveals a turbulent home life. However, it also displays the enduring power of the bond between sisters who are clearly separated. Those with a bit of life experience or a background in social services will likely "read between the lines" to see the varied possibilities of a difficult and perhaps destructive home life described.

These occasional messages serve as a reminder that poverty and the sorrows of children who must pay the price for the choices of their parents often transcend the distant and sometimes nebulous debates about public policy, social issues, race and gender, which dominate our society.

A Santagram event is easy to organize and well worth the time. Not only does it afford the opportunity to educate the public about the history of the

telegraph, but the very process of telegraphy seems to fit a season built around old-time traditions and nostalgia. Perhaps most importantly, such an event encourages one to give some thought to the needs of the less fortunate. Most of all, one leaves with a sense of gratitude, not just for what one has, but for the opportunity to



SANTAGRAM



Transmitted via Morse Telegraph to North Pole, Alaska courtesy of the Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

NR	CLASS	OFC	OP	CK	PLACE ORIGIN	TIME	DATE
000381	T	SA	JW	21	SAGINAW MI		NOV 16

TO: SANTA CLAUS
NORTH POLE

DEAR SANTA FOR CHRISTMAS MAY I PLEASE HAVE SNOW FOR CHRISTMAS

A PLACE TO LIVE WITH HEAT AND WATER

THANK YOU

SIGNATURE: LORI CITY: SOUTH CAROLINA
(FIRST NAME)

The Morse Telegraph Club is an International Association dedicated to the perpetuation of the knowledge, history, and traditions of telegraphy.
For more information, visit: www.morsetelegraphclub.org

extend some hope to both children and adults.

Christmas celebrations are common throughout the Western World. Why not consider partnering with a local Amateur Radio Club to establish your own Santagram event? Your International President would be happy to provide you with advice to ensure a successful telegraph demonstration.

Lastly....our best wishes to all MTC members for a happy, healthy and prosperous 2019.

-30-

DID YOU KNOW?

Do You Know Who Invented Radio Transmissions?

For millions of years, the earth has been bathed in radio waves beamed to earth by natural phenomena throughout the universe. But the detection and transmission of radio waves, "the invention of radio," by earthlings is attributed to Nikolas Tesla.

On March 1, 1893, Nikola Tesla presented a public demonstration of wireless transmissions of energy. Tesla had invented an induction coil to transmit and receive radio signals.

Years later, while Tesla was preparing to transmit signals between distant points, another inventor, Gogllemo Marconi, attempted the same thing. For a while, Marconi received credit for invention of radio. The U.S. Supreme Court finally ruled that Tesla was the inventor of radio, not Marconi.

GPS TIMING PROBLEM MAY OCCUR ON APRIL 6, 2019

A potential GPS timing problem may be coming on April 6, 2019. This problem may happen when the “Week Number” of the GPS system resets itself due to processing bit-limitations of the system. The last time this happened was nearly twenty years ago (August 1990), when we were much less GPS dependent.

For a quick overview of the situation:

<https://www.masterclock.com/company/masterclock-inc-blog/2019-gps-week-number-rollover>.

There will be no problem with the GPS system itself when this happens, but there is a very big unknown about how ground devices will react.

The U.S. Naval Observatory has a good briefing

on this, and if you view the next-to-last slide, a Naval Observatory GPS clock failed due to a timing update in 2014 that was less fundamental than the Week Number reset. See:

<https://www.gps.gov/governance/advisory/meetings/2017-11/powers.pdf>

The military has been preparing for about three years now and there is some anxiety, particularly worry about older GPS receivers and even newer ones that may not be configured to properly handle the timing reset. See the cautionary notes near the end of the briefing.

Thanks to Boscombe Jay Wilson, W0AIR, Executive Director of DERA, for this warning.

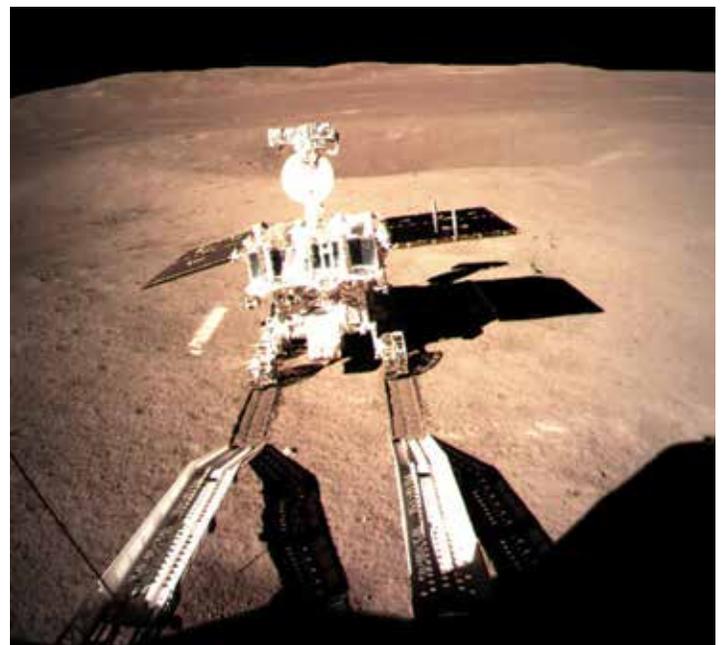
MOON LANDING JANUARY 3, 2019

We begin our New Year with the successful landing of a robot rover on the far side of our moon, a historic first. “Chang 4” touched down on Thursday morning, January 3, 2019.

This Chinese moon landing is the latest in a series of moon landings by China, Russia, and the United States. The Chang 4 rover includes low frequency astronomical observations. It will also probe the moon soil for mineral composition.

Next year (2020), China plans to send “Chang 5” to our moon and have it return with sample moon soil. This is in preparation for Chinese astronauts to land on the moon.

Just think, 175 years ago, a very short time in human history, the electric telegraph started this revolution in communications, leading to moon landings and space exploration!



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 repeated 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 members 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 04, 2017

Member 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 06, 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 9, 2017

Despite a low turnout at the annual Florida Christmas Remembered event at Barberville, due to the unseasonably 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.

Feb 3, 2018

Chapter members Clyde Francis and Don Andrus

CHAPTER NEWS *cont.*

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.

Feb 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.

Feb 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 members 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.

April 21, 2018

Planes. Trains and BBQ. Tavares, FL Although the City of Tavares spent more than a half million dollars to construct a replica of the local Tavares and Gulf Railroad depot, the replica did not include a telegraph desk. Chapter members Don Andrus and Warren McFarland remedied that omission by setting up two telegraph desks in the bay window space where the telegraph desk would have been in the original depot, and demonstrating the art and skill of American Morse telegraphy, much to the pleasure of visitors to the depot. One young woman was so appreciative of their demonstration that she hugged and kissed, on the cheek, both Don and Warren. They have been thanked for their demonstrations many times in the past, but never like that.

April 28, National Morse Day

Florida Chapter members celebrated Morse Day concurrently with the annual business meeting of the Chapter at the Plantation (FL) Historical Museum. The celebration included the display and demonstration of various antique and replica telegraph instruments and equipment, and a lunch provided by Cathy Feeney, mother of Chapter president Robert Feeney and wife of chapter member John Feeney. A connection was made to Morse KOB Internet 'wire' No. 11 and greetings exchanged with other MTC chapters and members from all over the world. Some Florida Chapter members who were unable to attend the celebration in person also participated on that wire.

In the business portion of the day, the following chapter officers were elected: President, Robert Feeney; Vice President, Warren McFarland; Secretary/Treasurer Clyde Francis and Webmaster Warren McFarland.

May 5, 2018

Heritage Days and Flower Show, Clermont, FL For the first time in many years, the sound of American Morse Telegraph was heard in the 1924

CHAPTER NEWS *cont.*

Tavares and Gulf Railroad depot, still sitting in its original location in Clermont's Heritage Village, along with several other vintage buildings and homes. There was a steady stream of visitors throughout the day. Among those visitors were at least two history teachers from local area high schools who were eager to learn more about the telegraph and its role in the history of the United States and Canada..

May 12, 2018

Tampa Train Day, Tampa, FL. This annual event, sponsored by Friends of Tampa Union Station, always draws a large number of visitors interested in trains and anything connected to trains. This year was no exception even though Amtrak had declined to furnish any rail equipment for visitors to explore. The absence of rail equipment appeared to encourage visitors to spend more time visiting the other displays and demonstrations, including the telegraph demonstration of the Florida Chapter.

Oct 20, 2018

The Florida Chapter of the Morse Telegraph Club attended the Florida Atlantic University's (FAU) Fall "Wayzgoose Festival." The university library has a 19th century print shop set up and a number of featured events are held there. The origins of the Wayzgoose Festival dates back to the Renaissance and was a celebration of printers and their apprentices of the shorter daylight hours of the Fall time. Candles and oil lamps would have been brought in to the shops and food and beverages would be served.

The university's celebration included local vendors and a Morse Telegraph Club display and demonstration. Chapter members attended in period attire and set up a MorseKOB terminal which allowed communication to various offices around the country for the Saturday afternoon Internet wire meet.

October 20-21, 2018

I had the mini-telegraph office set up at Renningers Event Center in Mt. Dora for the bi-annual Steampunk festival. The mini-office was part of a larger display. Steampunk is basically fantasy time travel back to the Victorian industrial

age. Our Chapter's mini-telegraph office setup fits in nicely as the 'Victorian Internet' and draws a lot of attention from those attending. Some are interested in the telegraph and Morse code, as with our usual events, but the majority appreciate the overall appearance of actual operating technical apparatus that dates back to the Victorian era. Along with the mini-telegraph office, which I slightly modified to have a more Victorian appearance, I had a fantasy steam engine generating electricity, with that machine receiving a Morse Code signal on a sounder and then repeating it using a mechanical hand to operate a telegraph key. That recreated Morse signal then went onto the telegraph office and then to a pen register that reproduced on paper tape the Morse Code the mechanical hand was sending. Visitors took many photos and videos of the equipment and delighted in both the real and the fantasy operation.

October 27, 2018

October 27 was the annual Jubilee at the Pinellas County Heritage Park. The old Sulphur Springs depot was staffed to demonstrate the Morse Code, the telegraph, and relate the history of the depot. As with many our Chapter's demonstrations, visitors are encourage to try a hand at a functioning KOB to get a better understanding of how Morse code was sent and received, and hear about the importance it played on North American railroads.

November 3, 2018 Fall Jamboree, Pioneer Village, Barberville, FL, . This annual event attracts musicians from all over the Southeast. A number of impromptu "jam" spots are set up all over the Pioneer Village, including one on the back loading dock of old ACL RR Pierson, FL depot, now located on the grounds of the Pioneer Village.

Florida Chapter members had the dep[ot telegraph office open aqnd competieing with the musical sounds comintg from all around. Many of the musicians who visited the telegraph office were quick to recogni the ryhythm of Morse code comintg orff a sounder.

There was a steady stream of visitors through the telegraph office add day. Many of the visitors were interested in the role of the telegraph and the railroads in the development of the United States

CHAPTER NEWS *cont.*

and Canada.. Chapter members provided those visitors with the best information available.

December 8, 2018

Florida Cjhrostmast Remembereed, Pioneer Village, Barberville, n FL. This was a special day for the many children visiting the Pioneer Village , with Santa Claus roaming the grou8ndws of the Village, and a special wire to the North Pole in operation from the telegraph office located in the old Pierson depot, now located on the Pioneer Village.

Many of the young vistors remembered sending Santagrams tos to Samnta in prior years and were eager to do so again.

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Warren McFadden

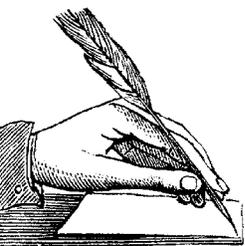


Florida Chapter member Warren McFadden answers questions from a visitor during the annual Heritage Days in Clermont, FL. The telegraph demonstration was set up in the 1890s era Tavares and Gulf Railroad which has been converted into a small community center.

Attention Morse Telegraph Club

Members with Email Addresses:

If you aren't receiving the electronic version of Dots & Dashes, please send an email to runnerrichard@hotmail.com and you will be added to the email list. You will still receive the paper version in the mail.



Letters to the Editor

October 21st

Kitt and I travelled to Ventura today and both of us placed in our respective age groups in the half marathon. I offer visible evidence. The course was beautiful and gently downhill. The weather cooperated with a nice 57-degree start.

Richard and Kitt Williams



October 23rd

Hi folks. Professor Henry Lippold, now a Silent Key, was my dear friend and inspiration, colleague and mentor at UWVEC. I dedicated my Morse Code book to him. Henry was so proud of our "UWEC Morse 2000 Outreach," and knew much about the role of Morse code in journalism over the

last century. He had quite a colorful career and was a cub wire service reporter on the scene in Dallas when JFK was killed. I will miss him.

**MTC Member,
Thomas Wayne King**

November 2nd

Here at Beechworth, I have been truly made a slave to Morse code. Last month I sent 241 telegrams to addresses around the world and today, not only did I send 29 telegrams, but also met a character travelling all around Australia from Brisbane in his motorhome with a parrot on his shoulder (untethered) and a large dog for company. Sorry to say, I did not have a camera ready to record it.

We met all sorts of wonderful people here at our historic telegraph station. That's why I keep going in I guess, plus for the love of Morse.

I will send you a book for critiquing and info soon. The book tells what Beechworth is all about.

You might be interested in a video on YouTube titled, "Keeping it Alive," by Jack Morrow. Jack is the grandson of one of our old telegraphists in the Morsecodian Fraternity. You can Google it under that title or use the link that I sent in an earlier email to the MTC slow speed group.

I will appreciate your comments in due course and eventually on my book too.

**Cheers,
Leo Nette - Beechwood
Victoria Australia, call sign BX**

November 24th

You are to be commended on the excellent newsletter. I always enjoy the articles. This is a much-improved quality than previous editions and I especially enjoyed the color photographs. You might want to consider adding a membership expiration date to the mailing address.

**MTC Member,
George Averill**

November 26th

In my case, I started collecting telegraph instruments about 1997 by attending the large flea markets at both Rochester Amateur Radio Association's large annual hamfest (one of the largest in the northeast at the time but now almost non-existent), which I had been doing for years, looking for old computer stuff. That's the year I first started attending the AWA's annual convention, although I had already been a member of AWA for over a decade at that time. It was at the 2001 convention where I met Tom French. Tom is the one who told me about the MTC. Previously I had not come across any reference to the Morse Telegraph Club.

Somehow, I got directed to contact Keith LeBaron, and from communicating with Keith that Fall I learned more about the organization and decided to join. Keith was Grand Secretary-Treasurer at that time. He sent me a few old copies of Dots & Dashes. Then, the very first copy of Dots & Dashes that I received as a member mentioned Morse Day 2002, that the Grand Chapter was planning to have a meeting in Rochelle, IL. and that the following day there was going to be a telegraph demonstration in Springfield, IL. Seeing the possibility of hitting two birds with one stone and wanting to learn more about the MTC, I flew out to Chicago on Friday night and drove to Rochelle, staying in the hotel where the MTC meeting was to be held. There I met Keith in person for the first time. After that meeting was over, Saturday evening, I drove down to Springfield to be able to attend the telegraph demonstration at a GM&O Railroadiana show on Sunday. There I met Bill Dunbar, Derek Cohn, Larry Card, and others.

Late that Sunday afternoon, I drove to Bloomington, IL and caught a flight back to Rochester. As I like to joke, it has been downhill since.

73,
Chris Hausler

November 25th

Great article about "The Old 97!" Have heard about the Danville train for years. But did you mean ballad vs. Ballard?

73,
Bill Moyes
N7IE

Bill was referring to the front-page story on the FALL issue of Dots & Dashes. Yes, to ballad; my spell check changed the word to the name of an old friend, Ballard.

November 27th

This upcoming May has some important telegraph anniversaries in it. May 10th is the 150th anniversary of the joining of the rails at Promontory Point, UT, which was of course signaled to the nation via telegraph. And May 24th is the 175th anniversary of Morse sending "What Hath God Wrought" from Washington to Baltimore. I'm wondering if the MTC is planning any kinds of commemorations of these two events. Of course, Morse Day this coming year is April 27th, which just happens this year to be Morse's actual birth date.

On last Saturday's chat on the wire, Derek mentioned something about maybe trying to contact the National Park Service about doing something at Promontory. I've been getting buried under messages from a couple rail fan organizations (Trains Magazine and the R&LHS) for over a year about trips to the site for the celebration, but it sounds like it will be a zoo and I think the Trains trip has already sold out. I also hear that hotel rooms in the area are rapidly disappearing.

73,
Chris Housler

November 29th

That's a nice shot of you on your perch [FALL issue of Dots & Dashes, page 9]. I attended the Army's Southeast Signal School at Fort Gordon, Georgia, arriving there in August 1965 from Fort Ord, California. Fort Gordon in August was quite a change from cold, foggy Fort Ord. I had shipped out of Fort Ord wearing the winter "Class A" uniform. In August at Fort Gordon, the summer "Class A" uniform was the norm. And wouldn't you know it, my duffle bag got delayed somewhere between Oakland, California and Augusta, Georgia. I guess the Army thought I was afraid of flying because everywhere they shipped me in CONUS was by rail. Not that I minded. But I was one miserable GI for a few days until I got my belongings.

I'd taken a coastal railroad shuttle from Fort Ord to Oakland. From there to Chicago, I rode the Union Pacific. From Chicago to Atlanta it was the

Louisville & Nashville. And then from Atlanta to Augusta I was privileged to ride on the Georgia Railroad. I still remember seeing the station agents seated inside the depot windows, green visors and sleeve garters and all. Yes, train orders on the Georgia Railroad were still sent by Morse in 1965.

After stops at Fort Huachuca, AZ and Fort Hood, TX, I went to Viet Nam for fourteen months with the First Squadron First Cavalry (First Regiment of Dragoons), ETSing also in October 1968. I was a radio-teletype team chief with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop (HHT).

I wasn't much of a shutterbug in 'Nam. I will say that 14 months in a command track (MS77A!) listening to VHF FM tactical circuits left me plenty of time to practice copying CW via the HF rig in my track. That really helped when sitting for the Extra class license after returning stateside. My call sign at that time was K7ZVD.

If I run across any pictures from Fat City or Hill 35, will write something up and get it to you.

Yes, every day is a blessing!

73 de Bill Moyers N7IE

December 1st

"Watch out for money; it can make you a slave." This is the deciphered "Secret Message" in the FALL issue. I do like the color photos; hope this will not drive up the printing costs. There was no damage to the publication due to mailing without

an envelope.

I no longer perform Morse demonstrations at the Transportation Museum since the passing of events coordinator and board member, Bob Easton. I think they shot themselves in the foot by phasing us out. I feel that our activities were a success and will miss going out there and doing Morse demos.

I am still operating Special Events Station W9YZE

**73 and good DX,
William NOWM**

December 4th

Our newest Morse code developments with Adaptive Design Association NYC and Google have gone live on the web as of about noon yesterday. We have worked hard to bring this to reality! I am taking the liberty of sharing this note with you from Ms. Alex Truesdell, ADA NYC Director and MacArthur Fellow for our collaboration, announcing this historic event. You will find my Modern Morse Code textbook (Simon and Schuster/Allyn & Bacon, Boston, 2000), now open source and well as many other resources at the links. We are prepared for and already getting wonderful worldwide responses. Thought you'd like to know.

**73,
Tom WF9I and Debbi N9GLG**

MTC MEMBER THOMAS WAYNE KING SENDS US THIS REQUEST

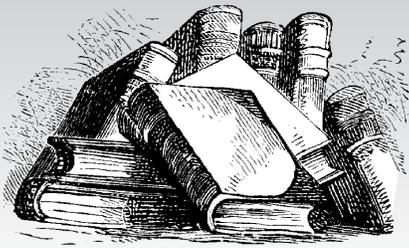
Please mail a festive holiday card to Mr. Robert Branchaud at 6995 80th Street apartment 406 Cottage Grove, MN 55016.

Thomas explains that Bob, age 94, has served MTC as President of the Minnesota region since 1968 and that Bob has done much to preserve and perpetuate the story and culture of Morse code during his entire career as a railroad and news telegrapher.

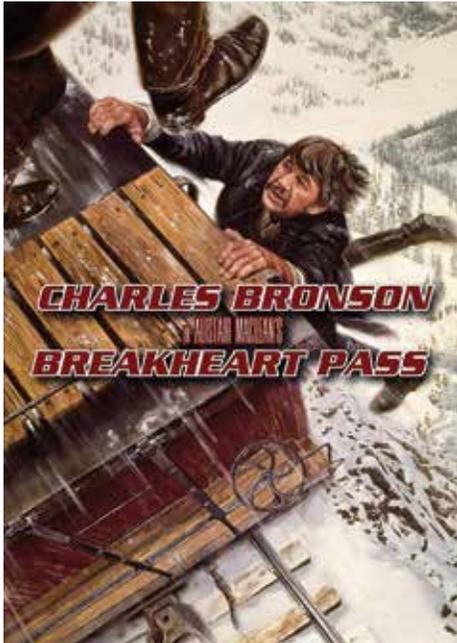
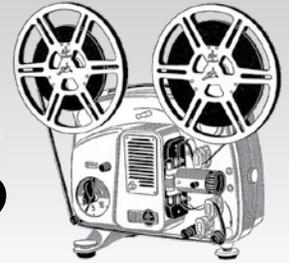
"I remember him telling at our annual Sam Morse birthday celebrations in April each year,

how, decades ago, he would copy the MC telegraph play-by-play baseball, to then hand it over to Ronald "Dutch" Regan to dramatize and read on radio broadcasts to the nation," explains Thomas.

Thomas adds, "Bob has always been a visionary for the lasting promise of Morse code for everyone. "Thomas further adds, "As a changing culture, we are still knowledgeable about code ant telegraphy because of Bob and others of his profession, skill and passion for Morse Code."



J. Chris Hausler's BOOK & MOVIE REVIEWS



Ireland, Ben Johnson and others. The story is based on a book of the same title which was followed by this screenplay, both written by well known author Alistair MacLean.

The story opens in the 1870's on a train which has been commandeered to carry emergency medical supplies and reinforcements to the US Army's Fort Humboldt in Nevada. The fort is reported to be in the throws of a diphtheria epidemic. Along the way at a water stop for the train, Bronson's character, John Deakin, is recognized as a notorious outlaw wanted by, among others, the army and is taken aboard as a prisoner along with a guard, a US Marshal, played by Ben Johnson. The train is also carrying the Governor of Nevada, played by Richard Crenna, and his fiancée, played by Jill Ireland, who is also the daughter of the fort's commander.

As the trip progresses, some of the passengers, particularly the soldier reinforcements, start to go missing or are discovered to have been killed. The evidence is mounting that all is not as it seems, both with the situation and the people involved. Many of "good guys" may not be good and at least one of the "bad guys" might not be bad. Further, the medical supplies turn out to actually be stolen

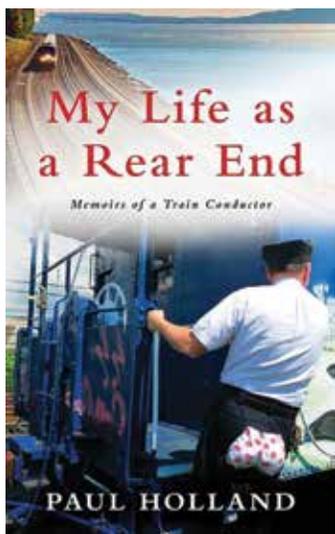
weapons, ammunition and dynamite, for sale or trade to the Indians.

During the film we see several telegraph set-ups. Despite the stated 1870's time frame for the story, the sounders all seem to be WU 15B's which didn't appear until the nineteen teens. The train is carrying an attractive portable telegraph set with its 15B main line sounder in an Acme resonator, again a 20th Century invention. The resonator is mounted inside the portable set's wooden carrying box which seems kind of redundant. The portable set is used several times throughout the film by both the soldiers to communicate with the fort and later is used surreptitiously by Bronson's character, Deakin, to send false information to the fort. Deakin had previously stolen and hidden the set aboard the train to keep the others from further communications with the fort. As was typical in many such films a number of the good guys and the bad, greater than reality would suggest, are presented as competent telegraph operators. That said, I could not make sense of what little code I heard.

The good news is there's enough steam railroad action in the film as well as a run-away, a derailment, torn up track, blown up rail cars and other "cliff hangers" to satisfy the most demanding rail fan, or telegraph operator. However to reveal any more of the the action would be to expose the plot and destroy the suspense being developed. If you want to learn what's going on and what eventually happens, you're going to have to watch the film. I purchased a DVD from Amazon for about \$10 and even cheaper DVD's or DVD's with this film combined with several other "westerns" on them are available. It is also viewable on-line.

Although the film was a box office failure in the US, I quite enjoyed it despite the period poor presentation of telegraph technology. As the audience, you know something is wrong but it's not quite clear what, or who is or is not involved in the chicanery. As the story develops ever more becomes apparent but all is not revealed until near the end of the film. Enjoy!

Films with any telegraphic content on which I haven't previously reported in this column are getting harder for your reviewer to find so if you know of any please let me know of them. My contact information is on the D&D masthead. Again, had it not been for a visitor to the AWA museum interested in the telegraph display I helped develop there, I wouldn't have known about this film.



Secondly, I'm reviewing a book which is a humorous look at an aspect of railroading but has nothing to do with telegraphy. However, since many MTC members once worked for or with the railroad industry, or still do, I think it is an appropriate book to review. And even if you weren't associated with railroading I believe

you will find it an interesting read. The book is, *My Life as a Rear End, Memoirs of a Train Conductor*,

by Paul Holland and is a retrospect of the trials and tribulations experienced during the author's nearly four decade career as a mostly passenger conductor in the New York City commuter district.

Published in 2015, the book is a frequently amusing, sometimes poignant, look at Holland's daily dealings with the wide swath of humanity that he encountered on the trains, some of whom seemed to be living in universes other than the one with which we all are familiar. The author's enlightened approach to his job found humor in most of these experiences either during, or sometimes after, their occurrence and he writes masterfully about them. This approach allowed him to remain sane, or at least only moderately insane, during these encounters. I found the book almost impossible to put down and think you will too.

To quote one of the reviewers on the back cover of the book, who was actually one of his regular passengers, "I am confident that commuters, railroaders, train buffs and the slightly demented among us will enjoy reading about his wacky life on the rails." I cannot say it any better. The book is available from a wide variety of sources for \$10 or less. Its ISBN is 978-1530851881. Enjoy!

PROGRESS AT THE RAILWAY MAIL SERVICE LIBRARY & MUSEUM

The Boyce Railway Depot Foundation hosted Morse Day on April 28, 2018. More than fifty people, many former railroad telegraphers, attended. This annual event near Winchester, Virginia, included telegraph demonstrations and a tasty cookout.

During the year, the New York Central Historical Society and the Norfolk & Western Railway Historical Society made presentations. Additional presentations were made about postmarking and

hand-stamps used by the U.S. Post Office between 1867 and 1931.

The Curator of the Boyce Depot is Dr. Frank R. Scheer, who comments that his interest in railway post offices was kindled about fifty years earlier by his observing passing railroad crews in Alexandria, Virginia as they loaded and unloaded sacks of mail. Frank adds, "For me, the next generation to keep the headlights shining upon post office history will be the RMSLF."

“30” SILENT KEYS

News of our brothers and sisters who have closed the key



Maple Leaf ON Chapter

JOHN E. GENDRON, age 91, passed away on December 5, 2018. He was born in Sutton, Quebec on February 15, 1927. He and his wife, Queenie, had just celebrated 70 years of marriage on October 12th.

John gave 42 years of his working life to the Canadian Pacific Railway, his only employer. “He was a company man through and through.” He started as an Assistant Agent then Telegrapher then Agent-Operator then management.

When he retired in 1986, John became quite the philanthropist and spent most of his time caring for the elderly and mentally challenged at Foyer Sutton, a long-term care residence in his home town. He also became quite active in his church.

Thanks to Pauline Gendron, John’s daughter, for this interesting information.

Pauline adds, “Throughout his life, my Dad was an exceptional man, devoted to his wife, three children, five grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. He was a compassionate man of great integrity and conviction and we must not forget his wonderful sense of humor which remained with him to the very end.”

Florida FX Chapter

ROBERT MONTBRIAND, age 88, of Naples, Florida passed away on January 18, 2018. Robert was born on November 26, 1929. He began his career working for the Northern Pacific Railroad as a telegrapher. He retired as an Assistant Vice President in the Rate Division for the Burlington Northern Railroad. Bob worked 41 1/2 years for the railroad and was also a ham operator. In his younger days, Robert served in the U.S. Army, stationed in Japan.

Thanks to Clyde Moss Francis, FX Chapter Treasurer, for this valuable information.



BIOGRAPHY OF A TELEGRAPHER

by Bernard Rochefort

This is the fourth in a series of stories by our MTC members, describing the evolution and career of a telegraph operator.

The FALL issue article, "Biography of a Telegrapher," was very interesting, as I worked in almost all the places Robert Hubbard's father worked on the Grand Trunk Western Railroad.

I started to work as a telegrapher in North Western Ontario on April 12, 1946 during the steam era days.

In late 1949, the Grand Trunk Western in the United States, a subsidiary of the Canadian National Railroad, was looking for telegraphers because many of their telegraphers went to serve in the army during the Korean War.

A few of us Canadians Telegraphers went to work on the Grand Trunk Western in the United States. My first job was working at a Tower in Port Huron, Michigan in April 1950, operating switches, so trains could move faster in or out of the yard under the direction of the Train Dispatcher and the Yard Foreman.

A month later, I was sent to work on an "Extra gang" near Flint, Michigan. My duty was to take orders from the train dispatcher and convey to the gang foreman when he could go on the main track to work. These workers were called "Candy Dancers gangs." There were approximately two hundred of them in each gang. They mostly came from Skid Row in Chicago and their wages were subsidized by the government. Some stayed for only a day or two and left. They were paid in cash at the end of each work day.

Another duty I had was to operate the cross over switch from the West Main Line to the East Main Line, again under the orders of the Train Dispatcher. There was another telegrapher a few miles west doing the same work. This allowed the work gang to work between these two points, as the trains travelled on the other track.

When the work gang was finished, I relieved one of the telegraphers at Battle Creek for two weeks.

Then I went to Cassapolis and was there for about a month. I remember Joe Eddy, a slender man in his sixties. I boarded at a house where the man was a taxi driver; I forget his name but remember what he looked like. A couple of times, I went with him in the evening when he made calls. These were very interesting outings.

I also worked at Schoolcraft for a couple of weeks, relieving the telegrapher there. Then I moved to the Tower at South Bend and the West end of the yard. The reason there was a a tower at South Bend was because poisonous rattle snakes from the Kankakee Swamp came out at night to lie beside the warm rail. A rattle snake had bitten a trainman operating a switch in the past. He died from the snake bite.

I recall going to work there for the night shift; I had to leave my car about a hundred yards from the tower. It was important to have a good flashlight because I remember seeing snakes a couple of times. This rattle snake was about two feet long with a big body about four inches in diameter. Yes, I was always glad to reach the tower safely!

From there, I went to work at Still Well, Indiana. Then it was Capac, Michigan, about 30 miles west of Port Huron.

In April 1951, I returned to Canada and worked as a telegrapher until 1963. Then telegraphers were no longer required. Trains would no longer be governed by train orders, but by a centralized control system from a train dispatcher many miles away.

So, I returned and took courses by correspondence from the Chicago University and graduated as an electrician, a trade I worked at until retirement.

Currently I am a member of the GO Ontario Chapter. I attend Morse Telegraph Club meetings in North Bay, Ontario with Peter Hamel as President. But, sadly, this chapter plans to close soon because there are not enough of us left.

GET ON THE WIRE!

by J. Chris Hausler

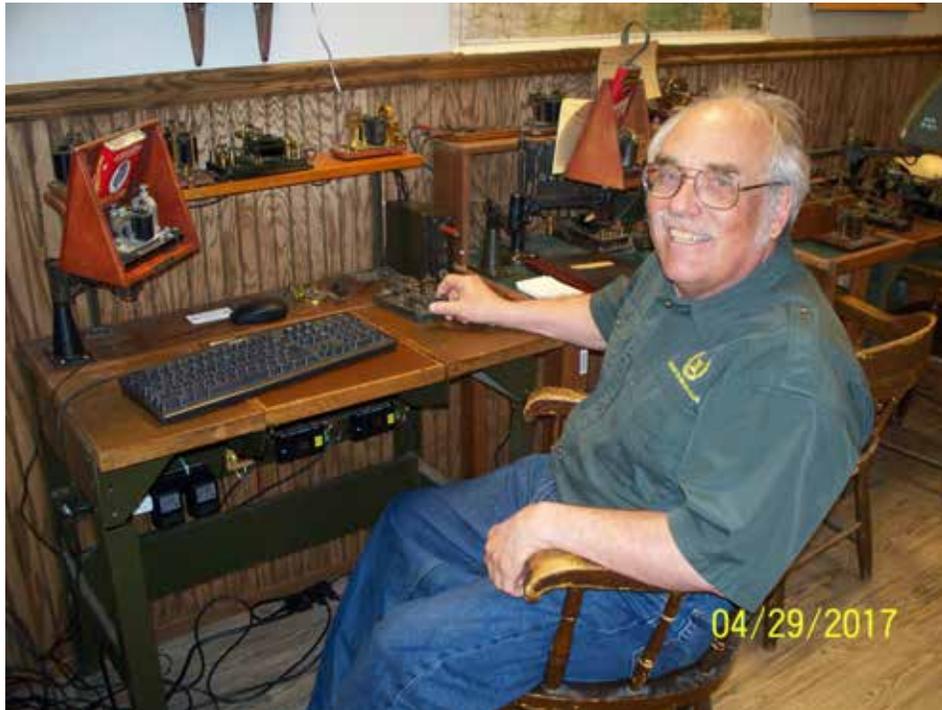
For about the last dozen years, thanks to the efforts of one of our members, the Morse Telegraph Club has had a telegraph communications facility unmatched in the history of the organization. I'm of course referring to Les Kerr's MorseKOB system. Using this simple to use PC based tool it is possible to engage in realistic communications over an authentic emulation of a classic telegraph way wire.

The problem is that many of our members are not taking advantage of this facility. A primary goal of the Morse Telegraph Club is to preserve the use of American Morse Code and to keep the essence of land line telegraphy alive. To do so we need your help! The MorseKOB wire most frequently used for person-to-person communications is wire 11. There are several regularly scheduled sessions each week on wire 11 and in addition at other times individual members can be found parked on one of the wires, either 11 or one of the other low numbered wires. To see who might be on at any time just point your favorite Internet browser to: <http://mtc-kob.dyndns.org/>. I'm frequently on the session which occurs from about 2 PM Eastern to 3 PM Eastern each Saturday, either from home or from the AWA Museum, but that's just one of the weekly scheduled sessions. There are also sessions on wire 11 on Monday and Wednesday evenings starting about 9 PM Eastern. The problem is that the only folks who show up during these sessions are from the same usual small group. It's time for some new

faces, or is that fists, to join us on the wire!

So what's your excuse for not participating? Worried that your telegraphic skills are no longer (or never were) up to the task? Believe me, most of us regulars aren't exactly top notch operators either. Curious, but a little shy about just jumping in? Feel free to just connect and monitor during one

of our sessions to see how we operate. Just add "listening" after the office call you select in the station ID block on your MorseKOB window and the rest of us will leave you alone. If you are worried that your code speed is not up to being able to follow the conversation, remember that MorseKOB makes a good



effort at decoding the Morse and displaying it on the screen. Feel you need a little practice before you join in? Again, look at that link mentioned above (<http://mtc-kob.dyndns.org/>) and you will note all the wires numbered in the range of 100 to 199. Most of these are broadcast wires there to provide you code practice at the speeds listed in their entries. Just connect to the desired wire and listen to your heart's content. They operate 24/7.

These broadcast wires can also make for great telegraph displays for the public. You don't need to be a competent telegraph operator to do a public telegraph display. Just connect to one of the broadcast wires to provide an authentic American Morse Code signal while you talk to the visitors at your display about the telegraph. In my experience they usually would rather hear more about the telegraphers and the people who used the telegraph. 🐱

and why, than to hear about the code itself or any other technical details. I find it difficult to send code and talk about the telegraph at the same time anyway. When you are monitoring a broadcast wire just remember to keep your circuit closer closed, either the on-screen version or your key's if you have a real key connected.

Now that I've got you interested, to actually use the MorseKOB system, of course you first need an Internet connected PC type computer. You then go to the web site for the MorseKOB system, <http://morsekob.org> and download MorseKOB 2.5 from the site. The page that comes up when you click on that link will describe how to do that but simply click on: <http://kob.sdf.org/morsekob/morsekob25.zip> to download the compressed file to your PC and follow the instructions on the page. There is also a tutorial about the program and how to use it at: <http://kob.sdf.org/morsekob/morsekob25/tutorial.htm>.

MorseKOB provides the ability to connect and operate real telegraph instruments on your PC, but it is not necessary to have them to use the program. It will make the sounder clicks using the PC's sound system and it will generate code as you type the text you want to send on the PC's keyboard. So as long as you have a PC and an Internet connection you don't need to make any additional investment in telegraph equipment to join in. Connecting a key alone, however, is easy. Only a simple USB-to-Serial converter cable is necessary; see the MorseKOB web site for suggestions of which cable to acquire. Then you can blow the dust off of that old straight key or bug and once again make some "American Morse Music" the good old fashioned way!

Connecting a sounder is a little more involved but the MorseKOB web site has interface information available on it. Further, a completely assembled "loop interface" is available from one of our members for a modest cost. And of course those of us familiar with the system are more than willing to help if you have questions or difficulties, or find yourself in a bind somehow. My contact information is listed on the masthead of "Dots & Dashes" and I am always ready to do what I can to help. There is a Yahoo group named MorseKOB (naturally) on which you can also ask questions.

Back before about 1989, Western Union used to wire together all the chapters of the Morse Telegraph Club for our annual celebration of Morse Day, held on the last Saturday in April each year to commemorate Morse's birthday. For about the last decade, we have used MorseKOB to provide this connection and will again this year on Saturday, April 27th. April 27th is Morse's actual birth date, in 1791. This year, 2019, is also the 175th anniversary of the first official message, "What Hath God Wrought", sent over Morse's Washington-Baltimore demonstration line, on May 24, 1844. So getting on the wire and celebrating American Morse Code is especially important and poignant this year. If you, the members of the MTC, don't do it who will? Don't let the history, art, science, technology, memory and lore of the North American land line American Morse telegraph system be lost.

So, once again, what's your excuse? This is your call to action! We're waiting and hoping to hear you on the wire.

73,
J. Chris Hausler

FROM TELEGRAPH TO GPS

The electric telegraph marked the beginning of the electronics revolution. During the past 175 years, technology has advanced from the simple telegraph to the telephone, television, computers, cell phones and the Geographic Positioning Satellites (GPS).

The U.S. Air Force just launched the first of a new generation of GPS satellites, designed to be more accurate, secure, and versatile. The mid-December launch from Cape Canaveral, Florida aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket is the first of 32 satellites planned to replace the older GPS satellites which are currently in orbit.

The new satellites will provide location information that is three times more accurate than the current satellites. Most of the world's defensive missile systems now depend on GPS signals. For this reason, the Air Force controls the GPS satellites from a highly secure complex at Schriever Air Force Base outside of Colorado Springs.

Today, an estimated 4 billion people depend on GPS signals. This is more than half the earth's population. Just think, it all began with telegraph inventors-operators Samuel "Finney" Morse and Alfred Vail!

A LOOK BACK...

by J. Chris Hausler

For the second installment of this column, I'm going to focus on a plaque installed by the Atlanta chapter of the MTC in 1959. It celebrated the arrival of the telegraph in Atlanta Georgia in 1849. One of the various documents relating to the history of the MTC which Keith LeBaron sent me shortly before he passed away was a single yellowed page torn from the Central of Georgia Railway magazine, "The Right Way" for May, 1959. It discussed the placing of this plaque. When I first received this page several years ago I made some effort to locate this plaque, short of actually traveling to Atlanta to look for it. I attempted to contact several organizations in that city and state by phone or email but only got one response and that from an organization which only kept track of plaques placed by the state.

Over my working life I've spent several years total time working in Atlanta on various rail related projects and in the late 1970's spent a couple of years there involved with the installation of their then new MARTA heavy rail transportation system. What's more, the installation of this system likely severely impacted the area where the plaque had been placed. Although unaware of the plaque at that time or any time since that I've been in Atlanta, most recently most of fall 2006, I was a frequent visitor to the area known as "Underground Atlanta" which possibly is, I believe, near where the plaque had been installed. I do not recall seeing this plaque during those visits but did see a number of other plaques, probably of a more recent vintage, that have been placed in that area. Between my first visit to the "Underground" in fall 1976 and my last in fall 2006 the area has undergone many changes and many "ups and downs" in popularity and thus many "opportunities" for the plaque to have been moved or even removed. So, MTC members, should you find yourself in the Atlanta area, you now have a quest, find that plaque, or try to determine what has become of it. Here's the article from that May 1959 issue of "The Right Way", transcribed verbatim: "*When the Telegraph Came to Atlanta*"

Central of Georgia Railway played an important part in providing Atlanta's first telegraph. The circuit went from Savannah to Macon along the

then Central Railroad and Banking Co., and thence to Atlanta along the Macon and Western Railroad which later became part of the Central of Georgia system.

Atlanta is one of the few cities in the country where history recorded the exact details on the first telegrapher, the first telegram, the sender, contents, destination, etc.

The Atlanta chapter of the Morse Telegraph Club of America, Inc., will unveil a bronze plaque on Sunday afternoon, May 24, at 3 p.m. identifying the location of the M&W depot and details of the first historic telegram.



Mr. Hester

Fred L. Hester, president of the Atlanta chapter, MTCA, is a student of early telegraph history in this region and has unearthed much interesting information. The plaque, which will be placed on the south side of the Pryor street viaduct, will be directly above the M&W rock depot which Sherman destroyed in 1864.

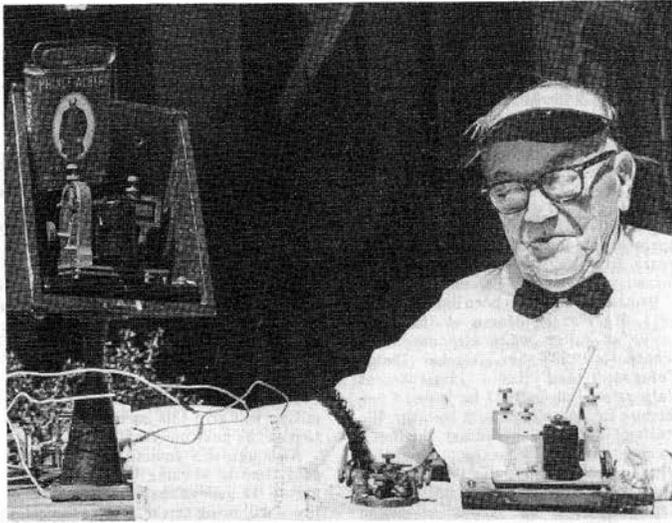
Atlanta's first telegraph office was opened in this depot in May, 1849. The operator was Cornelius R. Hanleiter who was proudly listed in the Atlanta 1850 U. S. Census as a "Telegraph Operator." The messengers were his son, William R. Hanleiter, and Augustus Shaw.

The first telegram was filed by Dr. Elisha Kent Kane, the noted Arctic explorer, who was visiting in Atlanta. It was to his father in Philadelphia asking that certain supplies be assembled and held ready for the explorer's forthcoming ocean voyage on another trip to the Arctic. The exact day in May, 1849, when the message was filed has been lost somewhere in the dusty pages of history, but may some day come to light.

The first message went to Savannah where it was transferred to the Washington to New Orleans lines of the American Telegraph Co., and at Washington was relayed to another circuit to Philadelphia.

The first incoming telegram was to U. L. Wright, agent of the M&W.

It might be noted that the little village of Atlanta obtained the telegraph just five years after Morse



Fred L. Hester, President, Atlanta (AX) Chapter, shown with a Civil War Telegraph office at the depot at Andersonville, Ga. Hester set up an "Office" and operated it for two days.

demonstrated the practicability of his invention before high government officials.

Morse sent the first message, "What Hath God Wrought?" from Washington to Baltimore on May 24, 1844, and the plaque in Atlanta will be unveiled exactly to the day, 115 years after this historic event.

Mr. Hester has borrowed from the Western Union Museum in New York an exact replica (working model) of Morse's 1844 tape recorder instrument, which was used for Atlanta's first message. This replica will be on exhibit at the ceremony, along with conventional telegraph equipment.

Among those invited to participate are Mayor W. B. Hartsfield; W. E. Dillard, Central president and general manager; Franklin M. Garrett, Atlanta historian; G. E. Mulliniks, general manager, Western Union; Col. Allen M. Julian, director, Atlanta Historical Society; C. E. Gregory, director, Georgia Historical Commission; J. Clyde Mixon, president, A&WP; R. A. Walker, retired superintendent, MD&S, as well as several others. Messrs. Dillard, Mixon and Walker are honorary vice presidents of the Atlanta chapter, MTCA.

All employees of the Central and their families and friends are invited to attend the historical event.

To add a little more content to this column, I was recently looking through an old copy of Dots & Dashes, Volume 11, No. 4 from late 1983 and found an article about Mr. Hester and another more recent photo of him than the thumbnail photo above which appeared in the 1959 CofG article. Mr. Hester was still, in 1983, president of the Atlanta Chapter. This second photo was taken during a Civil War reenactment at Andersonville, GA, the location of the well known Civil War confederate prison which is now a National Historic Site. Mr. Hester was demonstrating telegraphy there as the caption relates. There are apparently still regular Civil War reenactments at Andersonville. Any MTC member in that area up for doing a telegraph demonstration at one of these events?

EMERITUS PROFESSOR'S TEXTBOOK USED FOR 'HELLO MORSE' EXPERIMENT

by Erica Jones

Originally appeared on www.uwec.edu/news on December 18, 2018

Morse code, which was developed in the 1830s and '40s with the creation of the telegraph, had fallen out of widespread use after World War II. That is, until Google resuscitated it by going live with an experiment called "Hello Morse" this month.

The experiment uses images from a textbook written by Dr. Thomas King, UW-Eau Claire professor emeritus of communication sciences and disorders, to teach people Morse code. By encouraging picture-to-letter associations, it turns

the learning process into a game. The experiment also includes the addition of Morse code as a language on Google's downloadable keyboard, GBoard. Once selected, Morse replaces the English QWERTY keyboard with a simple dot button and dash button, and it changes the dits and dahs to letters as a user types.

Beyond being an entertaining way to spend an afternoon, learning Morse has practical applications, too, King said. For decades, King has studied, taught



and presented on the uses for Morse code in day-to-day life.

“It’s just another way to communicate,” he said. “It’s another language.”

And the language does wonders for people who are nonverbal and require alternative or augmentative communication systems. If a person has enough motor function to operate a set of switches or a sip-and-puff device — a system operated by intake and output of air through a tube — they can use Morse to author original thoughts and feelings.

King said this is a major improvement from existing forms of AAC that require outside interpretations. It provides those with disabilities more autonomy and ownership over their words.

Although Morse has been used in AAC for around 50 years, King said he hopes its reintroduction to the world through GBoard will be profound.

“Maybe this technological leap is going to open it up to the whole world again and people will realize that it’s fun to do and it also has these unique advantages for people with special needs,” King said.

His personal fascination with Morse code began when he was around 6 years old, King said. When he came to work at UW-Eau Claire in 1988, he said he was lucky enough to be somewhere that fascination was readily encouraged. Then, after his wife, Debbi King, joined UW-Eau Claire’s Continuing Education office in 1990, the two got a chance to collaborate on a major outreach program at the university: Morse 2000.

Morse 2000 was a yearslong program that started in 1993. It included a composite of information, presentations and symposiums and two world conferences. The couple sent materials in their database out to anyone who requested them, no matter how far away they were.

Debbi King attributed the prolonged success of Morse 2000 to those at UW-Eau Claire who supported the program from the start. When the Kings first came forward with this idea, she

admitted, there was no money to make it happen.

“Had we not had the support of visionary leaders, we could never have done this,” she said.

These leaders, former faculty and staff at UW-Eau Claire, had the foresight to understand the implications of a project like this. Because of this, Debbi King said, they put their faith in the program, and she began writing grant applications and contacting

potential financial backers, and eventually Morse 2000 took off. Over the years, its membership grew to greater than 600 participants in 30 countries around the globe.

On top of the support on campus, Debbi King said she and her husband make an excellent working team. The dedication to this project extended even beyond the walls of UW-Eau Claire. They allotted much of their time and energy to this project for one simple reason: They knew how important it was.

Fast forward to this year, and the work continues.

In September, Tom King presented at the Adaptive Design Association NYC. Part of this, the Adaptive Design Game Jam, included ADA staff, people with disabilities and their families, students from New York universities and Google development professionals. Tom King was easy to pick out of the crowd of professionals as he was proud to wear a UW-Eau Claire pullover as he interacted at the conference. Over four days, participants worked with Google developer teams to create games centered around GBoard. These games are now available online, thanks to Hello Morse.

During this event, lessons from Tom King’s books were used. He said that was encouraging to see as a writer because it made him realize his work has survived and is still valued. In addition, he got a chance to give the developers advice on different teaching approaches and learn about clients and their needs.

These needs, Debbi King said, are what it comes down to.

“Ultimately it’s what it will do in the lives of the end user. With the availability of GBoard, no longer will someone who needs augmentative communication have to spend thousands of dollars on a device. Now they can use something that is free and accessible to anyone to do their keyboard emulation,” Debbi King said. “I think it will change lives.”

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.

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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.

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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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AVAILABLE: A collection of telegraph, Western Union, and Postal Telegraph items. These include paper, instruments, self-winding clocks, and other items related to telegraphy. I would prefer to sell these items as a group, not individually. Contact Gene by email at k4mog@bellsouth.net

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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
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By Jim Davis





Dots & Dashes

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