



Dots&Dashes

What

Hath

God

Wrought

The Official Publication of the Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

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MY LIFE

By Lavina Shaw

When I was quite young, I would often listen to the clicking of the telegraph, below my bedroom, coming through the heat register of the office of the Sifton, Manitoba railway station, which was my home. Being curious, I asked my dad, when I was about ten years old, to teach me the code. After about three years, my dad said I was good enough to go on the wire. I began to talk with other young men, also learning the code at other stations. I remember Ted Bradford, Ted Ryan, Harvey Shipley and a few others. I also helped my dad in the station, learning enough Ukrainian to sell tickets etc. as most of the village population consisted of Ukrainian immigrants. Dad spoke it fluently. On my 17th birthday, I decided to go into Winnipeg and try out as a commercial telegrapher-I

was hired that day!

After spending a couple months in Winnipeg, getting oriented, I was shipped off to Saskatoon SK to do summer relief. Most of the operators there were my father's age, and they took me "under their wings." I worked a 6-day evening shift, and often in my spare time would don roller skates that were used at times by the clerks, and skate around the hallway on the second floor of the depot. I was nicknamed "Maisie" there, and that stuck all through my telegraph career.

In the fall I was sent to Moose Jaw SK to relieve an operator who was hospitalized. It was a one-person office so I had to be a clerk, bookkeeper and a telegrapher. I was sent to a boarding house where they gave me baloney sandwiches every day for the

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Lavina comments that people ask her why she chooses to live in the very cold "Wild West" of Alberta, Canada.

She responds with magnificent scenery like this picture.

Dots & Dashes

The official publication of

The Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

Jim Wilson - Editor, *Dots & Dashes*

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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.com



Sidewire

Comments from the
Editor of *Dots & Dashes*

By **Jim Wilson**



The year 2019 is a banner year for the Morse Telegraph Club. As MTC International Vice President Chris Hausler noted in his letter dated November 27th in the WINTER issue of *Dots & Dashes*, May 10th this year is the 150th anniversary of the joining of the rails at Promontory Point, Utah. Derek Cohn has been communicating with the U.S. National Park Service about scheduling a special event at Promontory Point.

And May 24th this year will mark the 175th anniversary of Morse sending his famous “What Hath God Wrought” message from Washington, DC to Baltimore, Maryland as a demonstration to the U.S. Congress.

If you do telegraph demonstrations this year, do tell your audiences about these two historic dates. Also, these dates are prime time for placing a telegraph exhibit at your library.

By May 24th, the U.S. postage stamp commemorating the electric telegraph ought to be available at your local post office. Recall that I initiated this stamp about two years ago, so I am proud that the United States Postal Service agreed with me that this historic event is worthy of a first class “forever” postage stamp.

Recall also, that I attempted to persuade the Canadian Postal Service to produce a similar commemorative postage stamp, but they declined my suggestion, stating that the telegraph was U.S. history, not Canadian history.

So, we have the spectacular year 2019 ahead of us. This ought to motivate each of us to participate in our local chapter telegraph events or even to be a one-man-show in your hometown. Good luck to you!

Jim Wilson

President's Line

Jim Wades, President
Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.



As some of you know, the Morse Telegraph Club recently lost its web page to a syndicate in Malta that specializes in stealing web pages. This can be quite a profitable criminal enterprise, particularly when such overseas syndicates can steal the web presence of a well-known commercial enterprise. The process is rather simple; gain control of the domain and then extort a fee from the business to get it back. This is now common practice on-line and several high-profile articles about such practices have appeared in various well-known newspapers and magazines. As many have learned over the years; it is easy to make money if one has no scruples.

Fortunately, we have obtained www.morsetelegraphclub.com and are in the process of building a fresh, exciting new web page covering club activities, telegraph history, technological evolution, the role of women in telegraphy and a host of other subjects. The old content will also be included in the form of telegraph documents and other tools. More information will appear in the next issue of *Dots & Dashes*.

Talks and Presentations

Your President regularly travels to present talks on telegraph history. This year, I will be speaking at the Soo Line Historical and Technical Society convention at Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin. I will be assisted by our Milwaukee-Madison Chapter Secretary Don Mahoney who worked as a telegrapher and train dispatcher for the Soo Line.

I will present a talk on the history of telegraphy at the banquet after which Don and I will be available to answer questions. We will also have a working telegraph office at the convention from which we will be transmitting telegrams on behalf of attendees from the exhibits area. The telegrams will be refiled to the “Radio Relay International” network for routing to addresses throughout the United

continued on page 8

two months.

Next, I was sent to Fort William (now Thunder Bay) ON to relieve the night operator. The manager told me he didn't want a woman telegrapher, but if I came down in the basement with him, he would reconsider-I knew what he was after. He was my father's age! At the first opportunity, I took a train into Winnipeg to visit the Union office to lay a complaint, but they just thought it was a big joke. As soon as I could, I bid back for relief in Saskatoon.

That spring, a young gentleman, who was an operator at Melville SK, about 180 miles away, came into the office and wanted to see what this female telegrapher looked like. That was Earl and I married him three years later.

Again, in the Fall, when the relief job was over, I was sent to Flin Flon, a mining town in Northern Manitoba, as the evening operator. I was alone in the depot, in the corner of the waiting room, from 7 pm to 11 pm, six days a week. There was a saying, that in this town, the day shift celebrated at night and the night shift in the daytime. I

often had to deal with drunks, and one night at 11 pm, I had to drag a drunk who was passed out in the men's washroom, out to the station platform and call the police. I had never seen a men's urinal and thought it was a shower bath. I told a passenger coming off a train that there was a men's shower when he wanted to freshen up.

A couple times, I covered a Flin Flon Bomber hockey game, relaying it, play-by-play, to Winnipeg, from a telegraph set in the Flin Flon arena. A hotel burnt near the station, with two people killed, and I reported that to Winnipeg, as well. One Saturday, after I finished work at 11 pm, two of the boys from my boarding house came to pick me up and asked if I would like to take a trip down the mine. It was very scary. I found out later that it was illegal and the boys did it on a dare.

After Flin Flon, I again bid into the summer relief job in Saskatoon as Earl decided to go to university

there, and was working second-trick at Loop Jct., on the outskirts of Saskatoon. When the relief was over, I was sent to Port Arthur (which later amalgamated with Fort

William to become Thunder Bay). I boarded with a family from the Scottish Hebrides who loved their Scotch whiskey, but religiously kept the Sabbath, not doing a bit of work on Sunday. My night clerk was Walter



Kelm, who came from a poor farming family in Manitoba and was going to high school during the day, completing Grades 9 to 12. I felt sorry for him and often took over his job while he studied. I lost track of him for several years until one day

I saw his name in the newspaper. He was the head of the Canada Pension Board! I wrote to him in Ottawa, congratulating him, and received the nicest letter back, thanking me for all the help I gave him while we worked in Port Arthur.

For the fourth time, I bid back into Saskatoon where Earl and I got engaged, married later, in September, 1949, and I moved back to Winnipeg where Earl was stationed as a train dispatcher. A year later he bid on a dispatcher's position in Vancouver. I tried to get back on the Canadian National Telegraphs in Vancouver, but they said they wouldn't hire me as my husband worked for the CN, but I was hired right away by the Canadian Pacific Telegraphs. Their office was in downtown Vancouver, and when I worked the 5 pm to 1 a.m. shift, I was often taken for a hooker, while waiting for Earl to pick me up. Once, a man tried to drag me into his car, but I fought him off.

I enjoyed working in the Vancouver office and often copied news for the Vancouver Sun. One day I was put on a direct line to Time magazine, during the 1952 US election.

Both Earl and I resigned from the railroads in 1954-I was expecting our first daughter, and Earl went to work for my dad's company, Mary Maxim Ltd. About forty years passed by, and Dr. Harry Toop, a former telegrapher, asked us to go with him to a meeting of the Morse Telegraph Club in Toronto.

A couple years later, I took over the Secretary/Treasurer's job of the Maple Leaf (Ontario) Chapter. I held the position for nine years and helped build the membership to 175. During this time, in 1998, I was elected to the Club's International Board. In 1999, we decided to move west to Port Coquitlam, a Vancouver suburb. About a month after we arrived, I was asked if I would take over the Secretary/Treasurer's job for the Vancouver "DI" Chapter. In 2002, I was elected as Intl. President, while Pete Darlington took over my position as S/T of the Vancouver Chapter. During the five years I was President I travelled from coast to coast visiting chapters across Canada and the USA. I can boast that I have been in every state in the USA and every province in Canada. I met a lot of wonderful people along the way, including former presidents Bill Dunbar and Jim Adkins, former Int'l. Sec./



Treasurers Keith LeBaron and Roger Reinke, and all the directors, both present and those who were on the Board when I was President.

A couple events stand out in my mind when I was President. One was talking on the wire, from Spokane, to the last surviving Canadian World 1 veteran, John Babcock, age 107. He still was a good sender! The other was being introduced, by a friend, to Fess Parker, in California, who was the movie star who played Davey Crockett. Fess told me that Morse Code saved his life. When he was a marine in World War 11, he was told to learn Morse Code. When his platoon was sent to Okinawa, he was held back because he knew the code. The rest of his platoon were killed.

When I finished my five years as International President, I again took over the Secretary/

Treasurer's position of the Vancouver Chapter. Last year, because of being legally blind, I resigned. The club then voted to dissolve the chapter as nobody else would take the job.

During the years I have belonged to the Morse Telegraph Club, I have greatly enjoyed associating with its members and participating in a great number of Morse demos, reunions and chapter meetings. When this is published I will be 90, and I can truthfully say, that my association with the MTC has been the highlight of my life!



CHAPTER NEWS

Washington-Baltimore “WA” Chapter

On Saturday February 2nd, the Washington-Baltimore Chapter set up and manned a Morse Telegraph Club booth at “Frostfest” in the state capital of Virginia, Richmond. Participation in this annual amateur radio event is always fun. As a result of talking to dozens of folks and distributing sample copies of *Dots & Dashes*, two new members to MTC were recruited. Read about them under New Members.

Edmonton “MO” Chapter

2019 Museum Schedule in Alberta, Canada

Railway Museum

MAY 18-20: Victoria Day weekend Running steam engine 1392

JUNE 15-16: Fathers day Running engine 9000

JUNE 29-JULY 1: Canada Day weekend Running 1392

JULY 13-14: Running 9000

AUGUST 3-5: Heritage Weekend Running engine 1392

AUGUST 17-18: Teddy Bear Picnic, Running 9000, Donations to Ronald McDonald House

AUG 31-SEPTEMBER 2: Labour Day Running 1392, Free admission for Union Members, All other weekends after May 20th, will operate speeders until Sept 7th

Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village

MAY 20: Celebration of Spring

JUNE 14 & 17: Children’s Pioneer Days

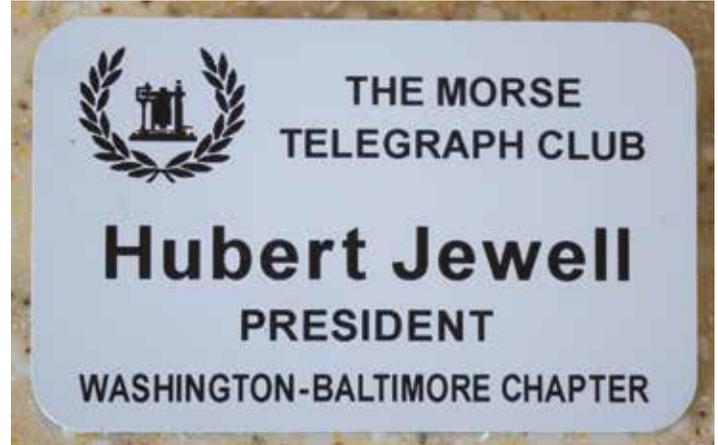
JUNE 23: Vintage Day and Ukrainian Music Fest

AUGUST 18: Ukrainian Day

SEPTEMBER 8: Harvest of he past

***We are looking for volunteers:
Please call Fred Pylpow at 780-475-0976***

Bill Tchir



Hubert Jewell. President of the Washington-Baltimore Chapter of the Morse Telegraph Club now has this spiffy ID badge to identify him and MTC during telegraph demos. This badge was prepared by “The Sign Man” at www.thesignman.com. But you may have similar companies near your location. The MTC logo is available on the MTC website.



Your Dots & Dashes editor, Jim Wilson, is seen here about to take his first ever ride in an ambulance.

Ice covered stairs caused Jim to crash onto the concrete and smash his left leg. Until this incident on February 11th, Jim was able to state that he had never spent a night in a hospital since he was born. Jim’s advice to you is: Avoid going outside when the temperature is below freezing and always use the handrail!

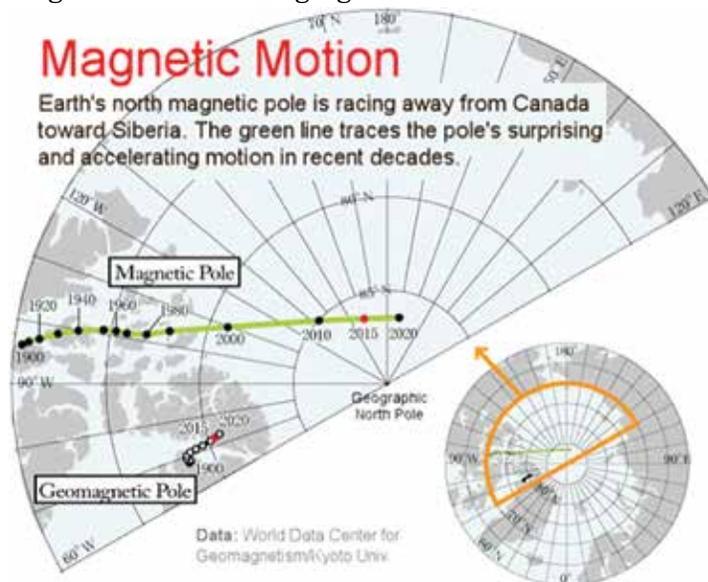


THE MAGNETIC NORTH

Contributed by MTC Friend Larry Wilson

The magnetic North is now closer to the North Pole but the second map shows how much the lines of flux wander over the surface of the earth. Interesting isn't it. Snow coming tomorrow.

Jan. 16, 2019: Pick up your cell phone and look at it. That rectangular marvel of modern technology contains thousands of lines of code. Among them is the World Magnetic Model (WMM)—a program that helps your phone navigate. And it's in a bit of trouble. Researchers have announced that the WMM needs an emergency update because Earth's magnetic field is changing.



Savvy backcountry hikers have long known that compass needles don't really point north. The magnetic north pole is displaced hundreds of miles from the true north pole and, to make matters worse, it wanders unpredictably from year to year. To find true north in the continental USA, you have to correct compass directions by as much as 20 degrees using a special "declination table."

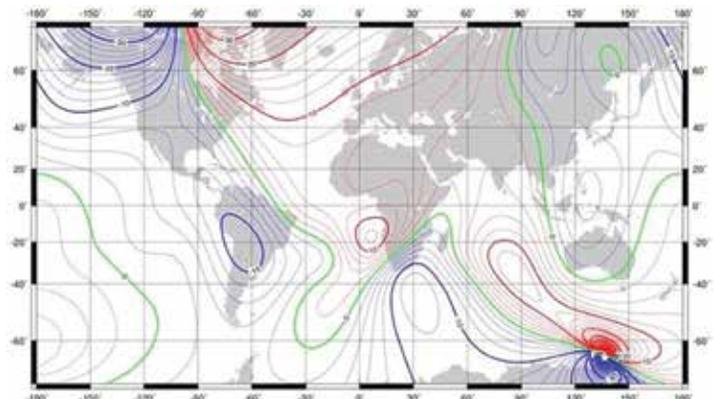
The World Magnetic Model is a computer program that makes this correction for you. It improves the navigation of devices ranging from nuclear submarines to common smartphones.

"The WMM is the standard magnetic model used for navigation by organizations such as NATO, the Ministry of Defence, and the US Department of

Defense, and also by smartphone operating systems such as Android and iOS," explains Will Brown of the British Geological Survey's Geomagnetism Team, which produces the model in collaboration with NOAA of the USA.

"When you open your smartphone's map app, you may see an arrow pointing which way you're facing, and there's something quite clever going on underneath," he continues. "Your phone contains a magnetometer that is measuring the Earth's magnetic field. In order to make sense of this information, Android and iOS operating systems use the WMM to correct the measurements to true north."

Normally the World Magnetic Model is updated every 5 years. For decades that's been often enough to track natural changes in our planet's magnetism caused by fluctuations in Earth's molten core. But



Annual rate of change of declination for 2015.0 to 2020.0 from the World Magnetic Model (WMM2015). This information is about to be updated by a new WMM.

suddenly things are changing faster than before.

"Since late 2014, Earth's core field has varied in an unpredicted, and currently unpredictable, manner [including a sudden change in declination called a 'geomagnetic jerk' in 2014/2015]," says Brown. "The aim of the WMM is to be globally accurate within 1 degree of declination, but we were going to exceed that limit in only 3 years." That's why, for the first time, they are issuing an update to the WMM before the usual 5 year mark in 2020.

The new model is based data from a global network of 160 surface observatories and satellites in low-Earth orbit such as ESA's Swarm mission. It was supposed to be released on Jan. 15th but has been delayed until Jan. 30th because of the partial shutdown of the US government.

GeomagneticField  Developers
public class GeomagneticField [java.lang.Object](#)
extends [Object](#) [L android.hardware.GeomagneticField](#)

States and selected locations overseas. A special telegram delivery blank will be designed for the event.

The convention takes place September 12 – 15 at the Wintergreen Resort and Conference Center at Wisconsin Dells. MTC members in the area are invited to attend. More information is available at the Soo Line Historical and Technical Society Web Page at: www.sooline.org/

Telegraphers Needed

As this issue of Dots and Dashes is being prepared, we are beginning work on the construction of a depot telegraph office and relay office at the Heston Steam Museum. If you live in the Chicago area, Southwest Michigan or Northern Indiana we could use some volunteers to occasionally staff the depot telegraph office on weekends this summer.

Duties include explaining telegraphy to visitors, answering questions, and accepting telegrams for origination to friends and relatives in other states. You don't have to be an expert operator, although some experience with American Morse or International Morse would be helpful. If you're uncomfortable transmitting message traffic, we will make some work-around arrangements to ensure the messages get through.

On June 22 and 23 there will be a Civil War Encampment at Heston, Indiana. We could use a few volunteers for this event as well. We can run either American Morse or Continental Code, so if you're a ham radio operator who regularly uses CW, this should be an easy event in which to "wet your feet." Unfortunately, this is also ARRL Field Day Weekend for ham radio operators and it is also the date for my granddaughter's high school graduation party, so my time is also limited! Therefore, if you're not active in ham radio and have a day or two to donate, we could really use your help!

Other plans call for a greater presence at the Monticello Railroad Museum in Central Illinois and the like.

Undoubtedly, many MTC chapters will have telegraph demonstrations throughout North America this summer. Even if you can't operate American Morse, help is always needed to set up exhibits, answer visitor questions, or operating using Continental Code if necessary.

Past President Lavina Shaw on Film:

The University of British Columbia has produced an excellent biography of MTC Past President Lavina Shaw. It's beautifully done and a wonderful resource explaining an important era of telegraph history. We circulated the link to the video widely on Amateur Radio web pages and e-mail reflectors, resulting in over 2000 views so far. MTC members are encouraged to view it at: www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=mJi7d7vHWVA

Let's preserve our history. Interview those who worked in telegraph industry. All that is required is a tape recorder or video camera. Remember; none of us live forever!

Golden Spike Ceremony:

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the Golden Spike ceremony completing the transcontinental railroad in the United States. In recent months, we have made contact with numerous individuals representing magazines, railroads, the US National Park Service and others in an attempt to include telegraphy as part of the event. So far, the silence is deafening. As such, it appears there will be not telegraph presence at the event.

I appreciate all those who suggested that we get involved. Unfortunately, it appears our "dance card" is empty. Perhaps others will be given an opportunity at the bicentennial event in fifty years. If, by some miracle, things change, an announcement will be made on our MTC Facebook Page and the e-mail reflectors.

73 to all!

NEW MTC WEBSITE

Recently, the Morse Telegraph Club's web domain was stolen by a disreputable overseas organization before the MTC could complete a move to a new web hosting service. As a result, the morsetelegraphclub.org address is no more. We have a new domain, www.morsetelegraphclub.com, hosted by GoDaddy. The change in hosting services means a more reliable hosting experience and a more consistent renewal process.

The new website is under construction and will have all of the content from the old website along with additional content. The new site is what is known as a "responsive" website that will function well on all screen sizes from cell phones and tablets to wide-screen, high definition displays. The best viewing experience will be on tablets and bigger, but even the smaller smart phones will allow someone to use all of the website features and read pages without loss of text.

Currently, there is a main page and donation page functioning with a PayPal link for donations to MTC. All processing of donations is done via PayPal's secure services, so no personal information is stored on the MTC site. Eventually, Grand Chapter membership renewals and new member applications will be available on the MTC website.

Plans are to expand the archival content of the MTC to become a leading source of documents, photos, videos, and audio recordings related to the art of telegraphy. The new web format should enhance the user experience and make new content and features available to MTC members and the general public.

Your patience is appreciated while the site is being constructed and new and old documents/media are added. In the meantime, why not type www.MorseTelegraphClub.com into your web browser for a small preview of things to come.

73,
Chip Morgan, MTC Webmaster

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION'S NN3SI RETURNING TO THE AIR

Submitted by James C. Owen, III K4CGY

The historic NN3SI call sign is being reactivated under the aegis of the Smithsonian Institution Amateur Radio Group. "We do not have a physical station location, and we are not open for guest operation as in the past, but this this is the start to Amateur Radio slowly coming back at the Smithsonian," the group's president, John Weise, N4NPG, told ARRL. "We expect to begin operating holiday-style starting in April."

Smithsonian Secretary S. Dillon Ripley (left), then-ARRL President Harry Dannals, W2HD, and



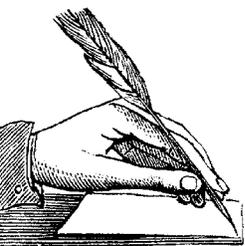
Smithsonian Secretary S. Dillon Ripley (left), then-ARRL President Harry Dannals, W2HD, and operator Joseph Fincutter, W3IK, inaugurate NN3SI in July 1976.

operator Joseph Fincutter, W3IK, inaugurate NN3SI in July 1976.

NN3SI will operate mobile and portable from several District of Columbia, Virginia, and Maryland locations on most bands and modes. NN3SI hopes to be on the air for most contests this year including Rookie Roundup, the ARRL June VHF Contest, and ARRL Field Day, Weise added. As he recounts, NN3SI was initially a temporary "special" call sign granted to the Smithsonian during the US bicentennial in 1976, and the station remained active until 2008 when building renovations left NN3SI without a permanent location.

"The call sign lapsed, but was renewed this year," Weise said, "and the new Smithsonian Institution Amateur Radio Group has been organized as a club for Smithsonian staff members, and to provide important emergency management and STEM educational resources to the Smithsonian Institution."

Thanks to John Weise, N4NPG



Letters to the Editor

February 2nd

My wife and I met you today at the Frostfest in Richmond, Virginia. This evening, I began reading your club's newsletter *Dots & Dashes*. I saw your website address and tried to go to it. I think your website needs to be renewed because it was unavailable.

Jim Hull KK4EOU

February 3rd

Yes, the old www.morsetelegraphclub.org URL is no more. It was hijacked by a criminal syndicate in Malta which specializes in taking over URL's and then holding them ransom. The usual target is the large company, but they are indiscriminate. There have been articles about these tactics in Forbes, the Wall street Journal and the like.

You may recall that we had a similar incident three or four years ago when a Chinese Company seized our web page and used it to sell discount athletic shoes. It took us some time to get our web page back, but we were successful at the time. However, with deregulation of the Internet, a variety of scams are emerging and it's rapidly becoming "the wild west."

Fortunately, we took some proactive "business continuity" measures a year or so ago and mirrored the old web site content. I also purchased www.morsetelegraphclub.com.

Chip Morgan and I will be rebuilding the web site over the next month or so at www.Morsetelegraphclub.com. The original content will be retained, but we will add some up-to-date content about club activities, some fresh links and the like.

**73,
International MTC President
James Wades**

February 3rd

How utterly unfortunate that happened. Cybercrime is an issue in this new age. Hopefully, at some point in technology will catch up with criminal methods.

Fact is, I am quite familiar with website hijacking. I am the Chairman of the King George TEA Party and the TEA Party website for our voting district, the 99th, was hijacked by someone that is vehemently anti-Conservative. Unsuspecting visitors are in for a shock until they realize, belatedly, what happened. Here is the link to the hijacked website: <https://va99teaparty.com>.

I read from cover-to-cover your club's latest issue of *Dots & Dashes*. Well done. I really like reading real stories of real people doing cool things and I found that in your newsletter. I am going to become an MTC member and get these in the future.

**73 to all,
Jim Hull
KK4EOU**

February 3rd

I will have a table set up at the "Orlando Hamcation" and would love to have some old copies of *Dots & Dashes* for folks to look and see what we are all about. Hopefully, these will "tempt" some prospective members into joining!

The Florida Chapter of the Morse Telegraph Club should be a viable presence there this year with at least three members who have already committed to manning the display. I will be in the swaps building and will incorporate an MTC display as part of one of my tables.

I am also hoping to bring some early spark gap wireless gear this year as well as some landline instruments for display and demonstration. We will be connected to the MorseKOB wire for at least a portion of the demo/show to exchange greetings with others.

**Robert Feeney,
President of the Florida "FX" Chapter
KG4UGG**

February 7th

I got interested in J. Housler's article and decided I would like to investigate and see if I could send and receive Morse over the Internet.

But I became very confused in trying to come up with an address for a website to get me started. I worked on it most of today with no success. Page 18 top of the page is just plastered with bits and pieces of sites. It is even hard to copy one with pencil and paper. The last attempt I came up with was "http://kob.sdg.org/morsekobmosekob25." When I finally had it entered and sent it off, I got a notice in bold letters: UNKNOWN, so I just gave up.

If you could come up with the one website that I could use, I would appreciate it.

Ron Kollmann
Newton, Iowa

February 8th

Follow your dreams, make new friends, exercise more and eat healthier. These are "Secret Code" words to live by. [This was the secret message from the winter 2018-19 issue.]

I am happy to see more letters to the editor than silent keys in this issue of *Dots & Dashes*. You did an excellent job and thank you for printing my article on page 12 in the Winter issue.

I would like to congratulate Mr. J. Chris Hausler on his excellent articles and stories he writes in every issue of *Dots & Dashes*. His articles are very informative and fascinating. I have obtained many of the books and movies from our library that he writes about. Keep up the good work, Mr. Hausler.

73,
William
NOWM

February 10th

I'm a long-time collector of train orders dating back to the late 50's with a special interest in the Erie and EL railroads.

I have a question about the location of several stations on the Greenwood Lake Branch or Division. It was also the NY&GL RR in the very distant past. The branch in question is in NJ and lower NY. I have train orders from CS and V. Can you tell me the location of these offices? Also, MY on the same branch. I wonder if they may be Forrest Hill or North Fullerton Avenue.

The first two locations would be most welcomed. I have checked my employees timetables back to the 30's and can't nail them down.

73,
Dr. Edward A. Metz

February 24th

Thanks so much for your interest in the telegraph project being undertaken by the Apple Valley Model Railroad Club. This is just getting underway and is being driven primarily by John Pezzono, one of our members who also has considerable IT experience.

As for photos, I'd be glad to send whatever I take as the project progresses.

Dave Hull
(Jim Hull's dad)

Read more about Jim Hull under New Members.

March 4th

Every now and then, I've seen references to some sort of collection of the Western Union Company records. Before I resort to Mr. Google for his opinion, I thought I'd check with you gentlemen to see if anyone within MTC has knowledge of such assembled holdings.

Some references point to the National Museum of American History, but occasionally there are indications of other resources. I am interested in employees and station records and photographs from back in 1930-1955 or so.

Appreciate any insight!

73,
Dave Williams

March 20th

I'm constantly impressed with the interest in telegraphy. My latest show was a ham swap meet in Puyallup, WA a couple Saturdays ago. I had a modest display of mostly late 1800's stuff and MorseKOB that drew considerable interest.

73,
Kevin Saville





Welcome Aboard!

NEW MEMBERS OF MTC

MIKE RICHARDSON of Barboursville, Virginia just joined the Morse Telegraph Club as a result of a telegraph demo by the WA Chapter at “Frostfest” in Richmond, Virginia. Mike’s ham call sign is KJ4MFN.

JAMES HULL of King George, Virginia also joined MTC thanks to the Frostfest telegraph demo. He comments, “I have always thought CW was cool from the time I was a Boy Scout to the time I was on a Special Forces Team, watching our radio operators ‘make como,’ to today on my rig making a radio contact.” Jim adds, “Morse is like a duet in music. But from an engineering perspective, it amazes me that I can have a QSO across the country using the same amount of electricity as a 100 watt light bulb.” Jim’s amateur radio call sign is KK4EOU.

CHRIS NICHOLS of Charlottesville, Virginia joined MTC as a result of reading a copy of *Dots & Dashes*. (I leave copies of *Dots & Dashes* at the barber shop, the library, the dentist office, etc. in Charlottesville. You never know who might pick up a copy and read it and say: Wow, I want to join the Morse Telegraph Club!)

DOUGLAS OAKMAN of Tacoma, WA

RICK DWIGHT of Palmer, AK

RONALD MAINS of Bickleton, WA

JOE TASH of Westcliffe, CO

DID YOU KNOW?

Do you know how long the earth is expected to last and if other planets support intelligent life?

It took 4 ½ billion years to get planet earth ready for us to live here. If nothing drastic happens, humans may inhabit the earth for a few more billion years, until the sun runs out of fuel and becomes a “red giant,” engulfing the three inner planets: Mercury, Venus, and Earth. We see this natural process happening throughout the universe.

However, because we currently have approximately 15,000 hydrogen bombs manufactured and ready to launch, owned by nine countries, civilization on earth may be shortened significantly. During the past fifty years, we have come very close to nuclear war . . . five times.

The Frank Drake formula estimates the number of civilizations in the Milky Way Galaxy whose electronic emissions are detectable. Call this N.

The formula is $N = R \times F_p \times N_e \times f_i \times f_c \times L$

R = the rate of formation of stars suitable for the development of intelligent life

F_p = the fraction of those stars with planetary systems

N_e = the number of planets, per solar system, with an environment suitable for life

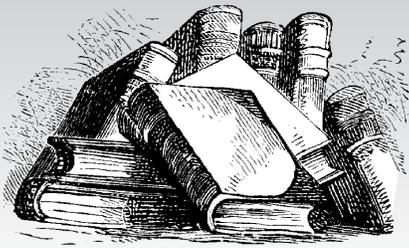
F_i = the fraction of suitable planets on which life appears

F_i = the fraction of life bearing planets on which intelligent life emerges

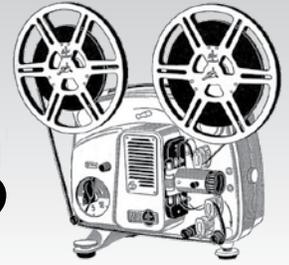
F_c = the fraction of civilizations that develop technology that releases detectable signs of their existence in space

L = the length of time such civilizations release detectable signals into space.

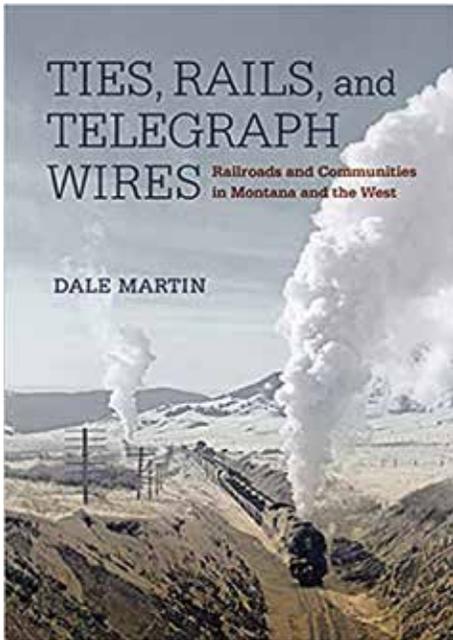
Forever may not last forever.



J. Chris Hausler's BOOK & MOVIE REVIEWS



I frequently buy books on-line from Amazon and as a result they are continually bombarding me with emails containing suggestions for other books they think I might want to read. Most of these suggestions hold no interest for me and I wonder



how they came up with some of them, but early this year one stood out. That book is *Ties, Rails, and Telegraph Wires, Railroads and Communities in Montana and the West*, by Dale Martin. It was just published by the Montana Historical Society Press

in 2018. It's ISBN is 978-1940527925 and it lists for \$19.95. With a title like that I just had to check it out and so bought a copy.

The book is a fascinating look at the impact of the railroads on the development of the west, both in small towns and large cities. Obviously it concentrates on places in Montana but other locations are also referenced. It focuses on the time period from the late 19th Century to the mid 20th Century. In some ways it is a lament about what has been lost, both of a railroad aspect and in general, since then.

One particularly pleasurable feature of the book is the many period photographs included of people, trains and stations, both large and small. The book is essentially a look at living with the railroad as a mostly friendly and useful neighbor, when trains, steam engines, railroad stations and the telegraph were just a familiar part of everyday life. Further,

a number of the photographs in the book were taken by a pair of Northern Pacific employees who knew each other, one a brakeman and conductor, Warren McGee, and the other a telegraph operator, Ron V. Nixon. Both are pictured in the book, McGee's photo taken by Ron. Ron started his working life as a telegraph operator at a very young age. Both of his parents were operators and he grew up living in the railroad stations where they worked. He eventually advanced to become a dispatcher and finished out his 50 year career as the wirechief of the NP's Missoula, MT relay office.

Although the book is not about the telegraph as such, the telegraph and telegraphers are frequently mentioned as, after all, they were once a common part of railroad life in that time period. Everyone knew the agent/telegrapher in the local station. In small towns and even some larger ones, the railroad station was the practical, if not always the actual, center of town activity, and sometimes the only location of any real activity, and thus entertainment, in a small town. One amusing sentence quoted in this book is, "It was so quiet Huttinger, the depot agent would swing his telegraph arm to the open window, and then go and sit in the privy 50 yards away and be able to



Ronald V. Nixon, 14 year old telegraph operator, National Hotel, 1925. Courtesy National Park Service, Yellowstone National Park.

read any message that clicked in on the sounder.” The very small Montana community to which this quote refers is Zurich and although BNSF double track still passes this former GN site and Amtrak’s Empire Builder roars past, neither take note anymore of this dot on the map. The railroad’s station, section house and employees once there are all gone and the telegraph, office call Z, has long been silent.



Although Amtrak’s Empire Builder still traverses the former GN main line in Montana, the more southerly NP main line, much discussed in the book, no longer has any scheduled passenger service and the majority of the Milwaukee Road main which paralleled much of the former NP has been torn up. Further, not needing two transcontinental routes across Montana, in the late 1980’s the Burlington Northern, the successor to both the GN and NP, leased or sold a good portion of the western part of their former NP Montana main to a newly formed privately held class II railroad, Montana Rail Link. At that time I was manager of the software engineering group at General Railway Signal which designed and installed computerized railroad CTC systems. As MRL needed a CTC system to control their new railroad, I had the pleasure, over lunch in Missoula, of convincing the president of MRL to buy theirs from GRS.

But the book was even more interesting to me because for a number of years since retiring I have ridden on a friend’s private rail car “Federal” as part of AAPRCO’s annual all private car convention train. The 2016 convention train ran from Denver to Spokane, WA, the location of that years convention. We came north from Denver on the BNSF but a ways west of Billings we turned west on Montana Rail Link all the way to

Sandpoint, ID on MRL’s former NP main and then on to Spokane.

During this run we spent several days parked at both Livingston, MT while we visited Yellowstone National Park and then several more days parked at Missoula. When being driven south from Livingston to Yellowstone we paralleled the remains of the former NP branch to Gardiner, MT at the northern entrance to Yellowstone, the location of the Roosevelt Arch. This branch was once the way many visitors reached the park and the NP advertised themselves as the “Yellowstone Park Line”. The now abandoned ROW was clearly visible at most places along the way. The long gone station and balloon track at Gardiner is pictured in the book, with the Roosevelt Arch in the background, in a photo taken by Ron Nixon. The NP’s large station at Livingston pictured in the book still stands and can be visited. Unfortunately with our limited time there I didn’t get a chance but there is a very nice web site about the station at this link: <https://www.livingstondepot.org/>.

MRL’s former NP main was advertised as a very scenic route and it’s true. Attached is a photo I took from the open back platform of Federal looking forward, showing some of the all private car train crossing a curved trestle on our way from Livingston to Missoula. Also much of this former NP main paralleled the Milwaukee main, sometimes even crossing it. The now abandoned Milwaukee ROW was still frequently visible from the train as we rode along. Occasionally surviving electric substation buildings as well as some still extant wooden poles which once carried the catenary wire over the track and delivered “white coal” to the Milwaukee’s electric engines were seen.

In Missoula, we saw the former NP station, now home to private business offices, and next to it steam engine 1356 a 4-6-0, donated to the city by the NP in 1955, its donation mentioned in the

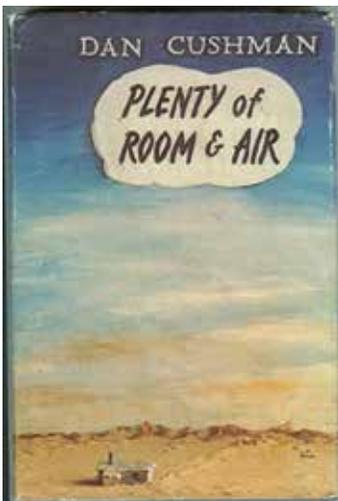


book with a photo. We were also given a tour of the former Milwaukee Road station in Missoula. It is now the home of the Boone and Crockett Club, a big game hunting and conservancy group founded in 1887 by Teddy Roosevelt. Both of these stations are pictured in the book back when they were still serving as passenger stations.

I've attached another photo I took during this trip showing the former track side of the Missoula Milwaukee Road station. That surviving signal tower seen on the left side of this photo is also shown in the photo of the station in the book and I wonder if, given its configuration, it might have been the order board for the station. During the tour I did get up in the shorter tower. Note the statue of a grizzly bear in front of the station placed there by the Boone and Crockett Club.

While in Missoula we also visited the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula. Among a number of other old buildings they have moved to the site and preserved was the small wooden 1910 Milwaukee Road depot from Drummond, MT.

In any case I quite enjoyed this book's look back to a world where the railroad scene was once commonplace and familiar and the clicking of telegraph sounders could still be heard in towns along the way. I think many of you will enjoy it too!



In keeping with this theme, the second book I am reviewing was one of the references used by the author of the above book and in fact that quote about the depot agent, Huttinger in Zurich, MT, was taken from this second book. This book is *Plenty of Room & Air* by Dan Cushman and was published in

1975. Dan spent a couple years of his young life in the late nineteen teens living in Zurich, MT. His father had bought a a pool hall, soda fountain and dance hall there when Dan was eight years old and the family lived in part of it. As it was the

only "entertainment center" in Zurich it became a sort of clubhouse for the entire town of about 75 folks. It was located across the road from the GN railroad's Zurich station thus providing a continuing view of railroad activity for young Dan and the rest of the community.

This book is not specifically about the telegraph or the railroads, but is a look at life in Montana in the early 20th Century when railroads and telegraph wires were, once again, just part of everyday life. The book contains many funny and poignant stories of the author's early childhood. During his very early life a branch of the Great Northern ran right through his father's homestead just north of Box Elder, MT. This was a time when the enlarged homestead act had just been passed and people were rushing to stake claims, including Dan's father. This book adds an up close and personal look to this time frame, mostly from a child's perspective, of life in Montana when the railroad was how one traveled any real distance. Cushman, who passed away in 2001 at age 92, was a widely published author.

Used copies of this book are readily available for under \$20 from all the usual sources, its ISBN is 978-0911436044. Some, including the one I purchased are signed by the author. Both of these books together can take one on a fascinating journey of the mind through a world of not all that long ago but one which can no longer be directly experienced. Enjoy!

To add a little more to this column, I was looking through some old copies of *Dots & Dashes* and came across some references to Ron Nixon. In the summer 1989 issue there is a photo of Ron, which I've included with this article, working as the telegraph operator for the Yellowstone Park Hotel Company at Mammoth Hot Springs in the park. He was only 14 years old at the time as the caption on the photo notes. This was seasonal work and also included in this issue was a copy of the letter discharging him from this service at the end of the season in 1925 and commending him for the fine work he had done. Ron was an MTC member and his passing was also noted in this issue. A collection of Ron's photos is available on-line at: www.morphotoarchive.org/rvndb. Once again, enjoy!

“30” SILENT KEYS

News of our brothers and sisters who have closed the key



Maple Leaf “ON” Chapter

RICHARD PRESTON of Havelock, Ontario was born in Belleville, Ontario on October 28, 1932. As a result of falling and breaking a hip, Richard, age 86, deceased on November 16, 2018.

Richard learned telegraphy at Cassan Systems 1951-52, following which he joined the Canadian Pacific Railway. Starting in 1953 as an Assistant Agent, then in 1954 he became an Operator on the London Division. He did a short stint at Mactier, leaving the CPR in 1956 to go firing on the CNR until 1958, when he returned to the CPR.

Richard worked as a telegraph operator for the CPR until 1968, when many stations were being closed. Richard joined the Maple Leaf Chapter in June 1998.

Thanks to Don Laycock, Secretary-Treasurer for the Maple Leaf Chapter for this information.

WILLIAM CHARLES BURGESS, age 88, of Branford, Ontario died on January 20, 2019. He was born on August 26, 1933. Bill was married to Donna for 34 years and they were parents to three sons and one daughter.

Bill learned telegraphy in Appin, Ontario in 1951. He then began his career as telegrapher and telegrapher/agent on the Canadian National Railroad London Division. A lifetime employee of CNR, Bill eventually became Traffic Terminal Manager at Oakville and Hamilton, the progressed to a higher position until retirement.

Then Bill became an active volunteer for various organizations such as CARP Sanderson Centre, the Kiwanis and others. A fifteen-year member of the Maple Leaf Chapter, he will be especially missed.

Thanks to Don Laycock, Secretary-Treasurer for the Maple Leaf Chapter for this information.

Edmonton “MO” Chapter

EDWARD DULIBA died suddenly on January 4, 2019. Duliba, a former Canadian National Railway worker, was given the job of looking after Fort Saskatchewan’s historic railway station shortly after it was saved and restored by the Kinsmen Club.



Ed served as caretaker and tour guide of that facility for the next nine years, before officially retiring in 1997.

Duliba was a passionate defender of history and the railway station. In 1996 he stepped in front of a City of Fort Saskatchewan backhoe that was about to demolish the station platform.

Duliba also kept an extensive collection of local railroad photographs and other memorabilia, having taken many of the photographs himself.

In 2018, Ed was the honorary Parade Marshal for the Canada Day Parade.

Thanks to William Tchir for this information.

Winnipeg “WG” Chapter

PETER WILLIAM KOWALYK, age 79, died on November 28, 2018. He was born on January 24, 1939 in Dauphin, Manitoba. Peter grew up in Sifton on the family farm along with his younger brother Paul. Peter completed his schooling in Dauphin. Shortly thereafter, he got a job on the Canadian National Railways, where he worked as an operator for 33 years and as a dispatcher out of Winnipeg for six years.

Peter’s life with the railway took him to many towns in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. He loved his job, although he knew that leaving his family behind to fend for themselves was not easy for them.

Peter married the love of his life, Nellie Lesiuk, on September 30, 1961 at Holy Ascension Church in Petlura, Manitoba. They enjoyed 57 years of marriage.

After their marriage, Peter and Nellie lived for a few years in Dauphin. Work then relocated them to Canora, Saskatchewan and in 1965 they moved to Roblin, where they enjoyed the new community until the present time. They were blessed with a daughter and two sons.

Peter was a member of the Roblin #625 Knights of Columbus. He prided his devotion to his work with the Knights and the Church. At home, Peter tended the yard and garden. He enjoyed helping in the kitchen and with household chores.

On the dining room table was a huge daily journal in which he wrote each day using his intricate hand writing. Peter recorded their daily family activities, even the weather, leaving behind a wonderful legacy.

Thanks to Bert Johnson for this interesting information.

James Hill “SK” Chapter

WILLIAM ARTHUR COWAN, age 77, became a Silent Key on May 9, 2018. Born on March 7, 1941 to Roy and Leona Cowan of Spokane, Washington, “Art” lived most of his life in the Spokane area. His father, Roy, was a conductor on the Spokane, Portland and Seattle Railway and his uncle, Leslie, was a railroad telegrapher. So, it is no wonder that Art became interested in model railroading as a teen and continued to collect railroad cars and train sets for the rest of his life. He was a member of the National Railway Historical Society and over the years became known for his quick wit and his knowledge of railroading, especially the Spokane, Portland, Seattle Railroad.

Art loved the old Morse system and became a member of the Spokane “SK” Chapter. He also spent many years as an amateur radio operator, call sign W7COZ. He and his good friends, Del Klakken and “KY” Keith LeBaron, were participants in telegraph and local historical events, including the 1989 Washington State Centennial. They became known as “The Three Amigos.”

After the death of his wife, June, Art moved to Santaquin, Utah, for the last 15 years of his life to be near family. Friends and family remember his cheerful phone calls and his daily jokes.

It is no coincidence that Art and his wife, June, are buried in Spokane’s Greenwood Cemetery, the only cemetery in the world with a railway tunnel running underneath it!

Thanks to Linda Dailey, Art’s daughter, for sending me this interesting information.

Grand “GC” Chapter

DANIEL JOSEPH GAUTHIER, age 88, of Colts Neck, New Jersey passed away peacefully on July 7, 2018 at his home. Dan was born and raised in Tupper Lake, New York. After Dan graduated from high

school, he served in the Army, where he attained the rank of Corporal and was discharged honorably in 1954.

During that time, Dan became interested in the telegraph and in ham radio, eventually earning his license with the call sign W2FUP. Dan met and married his wife Lola in 1954, spent 59 years together and raised four children.

Dan spent most of his career working for Raytheon Corporation, where he worked closely with the Army on procurement of radar and other military equipment. After his retirement from Raytheon in 1992, he continued his interest in amateur radio and was fond of helping others with their home projects.

Thanks to Paul Gauthier, Dan’s son, for this interesting information about his father.

WESLEY BURNHAM, age 95, of Thetford, Vermont, died on Memorial Day, May 28, 2018, which was a fitting departure for a D-Day veteran and World War II hero. Born on October 28, 1922 in Brooklyn, New York, Wes passed peacefully at his Thetford home surrounded by family in the house built by



his ancestor, William Burnham, one of Thetford’s earliest settlers. Right up until his last days, folks remarked on his dry sense of humor, friendliness and the twinkle in his eyes.

Growing up in the Great Depression, Wes lost his father at a young age, so he took whatever work a 12-year-old boy could find to support his mother. These jobs including delivering newspapers and working long hours at a local soda fountain.

In high school, he

found a job with the New York Central Railroad, which began his lifelong love of trains and marked the beginning of a career as a renowned telegrapher. Although telegraphy would soon become obsolete, Wes maintained his skills as a member of the Morse Telegraph Club, able to publicly demonstrate, even recently, a level of telegraphic dexterity and speed

that outpaced email transmission.

When World War II broke out, Wes enlisted in the Army and was assigned to the 4th Infantry Division. As a frontline soldier, he was among the first to land on Utah Beach on June 6, 1944. His unit later liberated Paris, fought in the Battle of the Bulge, and pushed on to Germany, sleeping in foxholes, haystacks, and the occasional barn during the harsh winter of 1944-45, before witnessing the end of the war in Europe. Like many of his generation, he rarely talked about the horrors, but remarked that “the war would have been a great experience if he had known in advance that he wasn’t going to die in it.”

Wes strongly felt the pull of an ancestral line that goes back to 1775, when the first Burnham’s migrated to Vermont from Connecticut. He was proud of his ancestors, especially his namesake, Shelburne Wesley Burnham, a renowned astronomer who was born in the same Burnham house, educated in a one-room schoolhouse in Thetford, and became a professor of astronomy at the University of Chicago.

In 1958, Wes and his wife Helen moved into the family homestead, spending years restoring the house, which lacked running water and other modern conveniences, and clearing the surrounding fields. Ever the traditionalist, Wes lived simply, lovingly tending his Holstein cows, his meadows and his forests. Some of his best summers were spent haying with the Osgood family, whose farm abutted his property, then cooling off in the old Pompey swimming hole.

Wes believed in hard work, a little hardship, and always living up to one’s word. He preferred to seal a deal with a handshake and never had much interest in lawyers and bureaucrats.

Hidden from view was his keen intellect: he followed politics, had lifelong interests in art, music and literature and maintained a deep knowledge of local lore and town history. Wes was also a walker, who often “stretched his legs” by walking to Thetford Hill and back. He hiked most of the White and Green Mountains, sometimes with family, more often with his friend Louis Hunter, his nearest neighbor on Burnham Road.

Thanks for this interesting life story submitted by Lavina Shaw, former MTC International President.

Saskatoon “KN” Chapter

Y. DON ELLIOT passed away peacefully with his family at his side on March 11, 2019.

He was born August 1, 1930 in Lanigan, Saskatchewan. Y. Don married Velma Wildeman on June 10, 1954. They spent 62 wonderful years together until Velma’s passing March 2016. Y. Don is survived by his three sons and their families, one brother and a twin sister. He also leaves to mourn grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and many nieces, nephews, and friends. Y. Don’s first job was with the CNR. He was a businessman to the core and enjoyed many happy years with Imperial Oil along with his other business ventures. His other interests included journaling, the Telegraph Club, volunteering, many sports, and following day-to-day activities of his family. He enjoyed many summers at Emma Lake and winters in Arizona with his wife, Velma. Y. Don is lovingly remembered for his kind, generous spirit, his incredible sense of humour, and his deep love and commitment to his wife and family. The family would like to extend their thanks and sincere appreciation to the Palliative Care Unit at St. Paul’s Hospital, The doctors, nurses, and the entire care team provided incredible, compassionate loving care. Don had been a longtime member of the Morse Telegraph Club, and we will miss him so very much.

Len Solomon

President, former Saskatoon KN Chapter

Lone Star “DF” Chapter

RAY BLAKLNEY and LESLIE M. MONTGOMERY

Thanks to Rusty Grimes for this brief information. Rusty adds that these two fellows passed away within the past six months, and that both were railroad telegraphers, one on the Cotton Belt Railroad and one on the T.P. Pacific Railroad.

Evergreen Chapter

Longstanding and devoted member of the Evergreen Chapter, Morse Telegraph Club, **RUTH TRUEBLOOD ECKES** passed away March 29, 2019. Ruth served as the chapter’s historian for many years. From the back of her books is the following information.

“Ruth grew up in Tacoma, Washington. Her father, Leo O. Trueblood was a brakeman and

conductor on the Northern Pacific Railway when she graduated from high school during World War II in 1943. The Northern Pacific Railway, desperate for telegraphers to man their stations, conducted a telegraph school in the Jamestown, North Dakota depot and advertised in the local paper for trainees. Ruth applied and was accepted for training.

“The NP hired her in January 1944. Ruth’s first job was at Kanasket, Washington in the Cascade foothills on the mountain side of the Tacoma Division.

“The depot had just burned. An outfit car was pressed into service as a depot (one half was the telegraph office and the other half a waiting room.) Her living quarters was a one room cabin in the woods. She worked the midnight shift (third trick) seven days a week and walked every night to work in the dark with a flashlight held nervously in her hand. Ruth was seventeen years old.

“Later, after having worked many jobs on both sides of the Tacoma Division, including double track between Tacoma and Portland, she met and married her husband, Edward Eckes. Ed worked for 43 years as a machinist in Auburn, Seattle, and Tacoma [for the NP]. Ruth continued to work until she gave up her job to raise a family.

“The history of railroading has always been a major interest of hers and continues to be.”

Ruth’s interest in railroading history resulted in her publishing six anthologies, as noted on the back of SPARKS, SMOKE, AND CINDERS:

“The idea for Rail Tales was born in 1991 at a meeting in Fife, Washington of the Morse Telegraph Club (MTC) – Evergreen Chapter.

“The author, Ruth Trueblood Eckes, a longtime member of the MTC, suggested collecting “real railroad” stories from the men and women who had lived them and publishing a book. Her idea was met with approval and the words, “Good idea, Ruth. You do it.”

“She viewed the remark as a challenge and immediately contacted retirees nearby for their stories and before long the national MTC paper *Dots & Dashes* printed a request for stories. Ruth’s phone began to ring and the mailman delivered mail, bulging with stories from many railroads of

the past. The end result was a series of Rail Tales books.

“Her first book, *Rail Tails*, came out in 1995 and was successful. A second book, *Blow The Whistle Softly* came out in 1996, the third book *Whistles In The Night* in 1997. *Call Of The Rails* was published in 1999 and *Down The Track* in 2001. Her sixth book *Sparks, Smoke And Cinders* was



published in 2003.”

Many copies of the above mentioned books are available at www.addall.com and www.abebooks.com.

Ruth Trueblood Eckes’ untiring enthusiasm for railroading and telegraphy, her consistent participation in chapter meetings of the Morse Telegraph Club, and kind devotion to friends and family will be long remembered and very much missed.

Thanks to Kevin Saville, President of the Evergreen Chapter

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

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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: "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: 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.

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

AVAILABLE: WD-1 commo wire, steel insulated wire in coils, about a mile long. Good for telegraph demos. FREE! Contact Walt Mathers by phone at 410 768-3162 or by email at Whirlygigger@msn.com.

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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.

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Richard Williams
International Secretary-Treasurer

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

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

Ham Radio Web Sites

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

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

NOTICES & INVITATIONS

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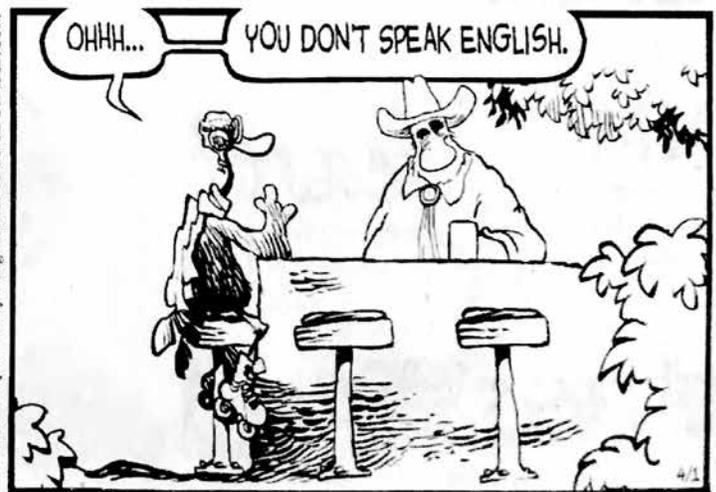
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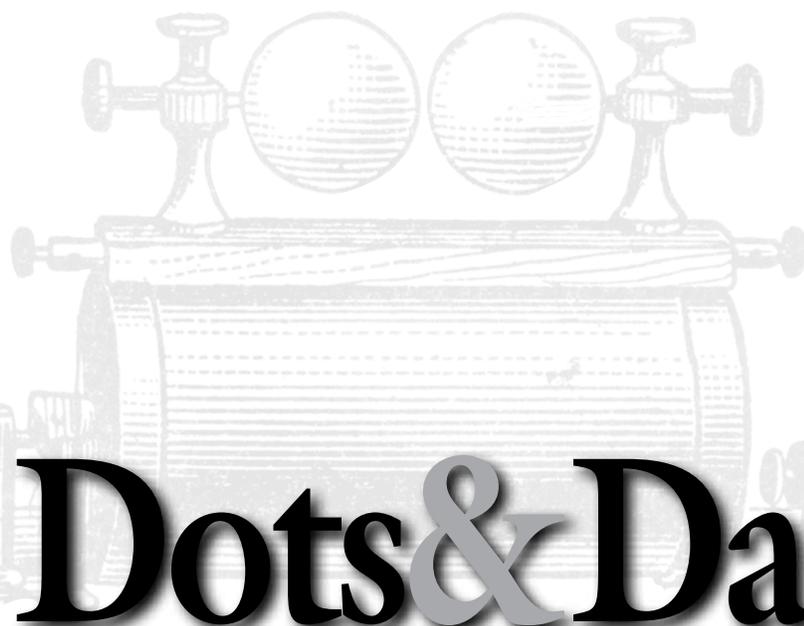
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By Jeff MacNelly





Dots & Dashes

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