



Dots&Dashes

What

Hath

God

Wrought

The Official Publication of the Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

Vol. 46, Issue No. 3 • Summer 2021

THIRTY YEARS OF MORSE TELEGRAPHY

By Glenn Paulson of West Fargo, ND

Readers: This is one of a series of stories by our members describing their lifetimes using the telegraph.

While attending high school in Grafton, North Dakota in 1942, I became a Western Union messenger in my hometown of Grafton. All communications were by Morse telegraphy, which I learned on the job while working there. During my senior year in high school, the telegrapher at the Northern Pacific depot suggested that I spend time there to learn the work of a railroad telegrapher. I took his advice. After graduation from high school, I received a message to relieve the depot Agent at Gwinner, ND while he was on vacation. The next day, I received greetings from Uncle Sam, ordering me into the Armed Services to help win WWII; damn!

The military made me a Morse telegraph radio operator aboard a small Navy ship. After the war ended, I became a telegrapher for the

Great Northern Railroad, working on the Dakota Division between Minot, ND and Saint Cloud, MN. After two and a half years on the Extra Board, I had permanent assignments at Langdon, ND and Roseau, MN, ending at Fargo, ND. During that time, I also had a couple of assignments handling Morse telegraph messages at the busy Relay Office in Grand Forks, ND.

As the saying goes, all good things come to an end. Morse telegraphy became obsolete on our railroad in the early 1970's. Then I became a Ticket Agent for the railroad and Amtrak. I retired from Amtrak in 1987.

Thinking back on my career, I enjoyed many years as a telegrapher and also as a ham radio operator, call sign W0QCP. Born in 1925, I am now lucky to be 96 years old. Life is good.

*Photographed
by Nancy Richie,
WB4RBW.*



Dots & Dashes

The official publication of

The Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

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

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

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Sidewire

Comments from the
Editor of *Dots & Dashes*

By Jim Wilson



The pandemic is slowly fading away in the United States and Canada thanks to the high rate of individual vaccinations. But we are not out of the woods yet. Worldwide the pandemic is spreading in less fortunate countries. This global disease has taken more than three million lives.

Your telegraph equipment: A couple of our members recently raised the question: What is going to become of my telegraph equipment after I'm gone. I recommend that you make a plan, listing what you have with its estimated sale value and how you would like your valuable possessions distributed. Unfortunately, we will not live forever.

Track & Trace is a new mailing service that we just purchased. With this service, each copy of *Dots & Dashes* will be traceable, with the delivery date known. The MTC Board of Directors feels this new service will be helpful to members. This new service will not speed up mail delivery but it will let us know where the delays are happening.

Keep up your code speed so that you will be ready to show the public the original telegraph, the beginning of the communications revolution! Soon we will be doing telegraph demonstrations again; something to look forward to.

President's Line

Jim Wades, President
Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.



Duality?

From the earliest time in human history, the concept of the duality of the human condition has been commonplace in culture and religion. One might also suggest that this decidedly human characteristic is reflected in much of what we create, or at least in how it is used and abused. This can certainly be seen in modern telecommunications technology which, along with its benefits come many abuses and vulnerabilities.

In our modern Internet connected world, hacking has moved from an activity of youthful "geeks" to a systematic and organized activity conducted by organized crime syndicates and nation states, some of which might be more appropriately categorized to as "narco-terrorist states;" the result being losses to business and industry can be measured in the billions of dollars and the cost of national defense measures probably measured in the trillions of dollars.

An entirely new form of asymmetrical warfare is emerging in which battles may be fought through hacking. With advanced nations increasingly reliant upon automated systems, just-in-time-inventory, and SCADA or similar networks to control and monitor critical infrastructure, it is now quite possible to bring a nation to its knees from half-way around the globe. If a criminal syndicate wants to shut down a petroleum pipeline distribution network, it can be done from overseas using a server farm. In contrast, during the telegraph era, one would have required access to the physical infrastructure, not to mention the telegraph operators and testing-regulating technicians who ran the system.

Looking back at the telegraph industry and its evolutionary steps from manual telegraphy to teleprinters, concentrators and switching centers, one might argue that it had certain security advantages, one of which was a form of compartmentalization. Those who served in the armed forces will probably remember AUTOVON and AUTODIN. Likewise, those who worked for (the old) AT&T, will likely remember many of

continued on page 19 ➡

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF RAILROAD TELEGRAPHER CECIL LANGDOC

This autobiography is submitted for Dots & Dashes by Al Skornicka, MTC Secretary-Treasurer for the Thomas Edison Memorial TD Chapter. Al states that it took much effort on his part to summarize information from several sources, with editing by Al's wife. THANK YOU, Al and thanks to your thoughtful wife.

Cecil Langdoc, "Doc" was a longtime member of the TD Chapter. He passed away on June 26, 2009 at age 95, but his story was never told, says Al, adding, the Langdoc family would like extra copies of this Dots & Dashes article.

Al notes that sometimes he turns on his telegraph sounder and puts on one of his many steam engine CD's or cassette tapes then closes his eyes to picture himself in the old depot in his hometown.

Cecil Langdoc had a very impressive career in the railroad industry for 40 years, says Al. Cecil also practiced CW with Al, to help Al pass the Morse code test for his amateur radio license. And Cecil had additional hobbies of photography and radio-controlled airplanes. (Earning an amateur radio license no longer requires passing a code test.)

So, with helpful information from MTC member Pete Ostapchuk, and from Tom Langdoc, here is Al's composite article:

Cecil was born in Birmingham, Alabama on New Year's Day 1914. His father was a 43-year-old barber when little Cecil was born. In July 1921, his family moved from Alabama to the state of Illinois to Kankakee County, the birth place of his father.

In 1922, the family moved to Elkhart, Indiana, where Cecil graduated from high school in 1932. "These were depression years and jobs were hard to come by," said Cecil. He worked at various jobs including driving a delivery truck for a dry cleaner.

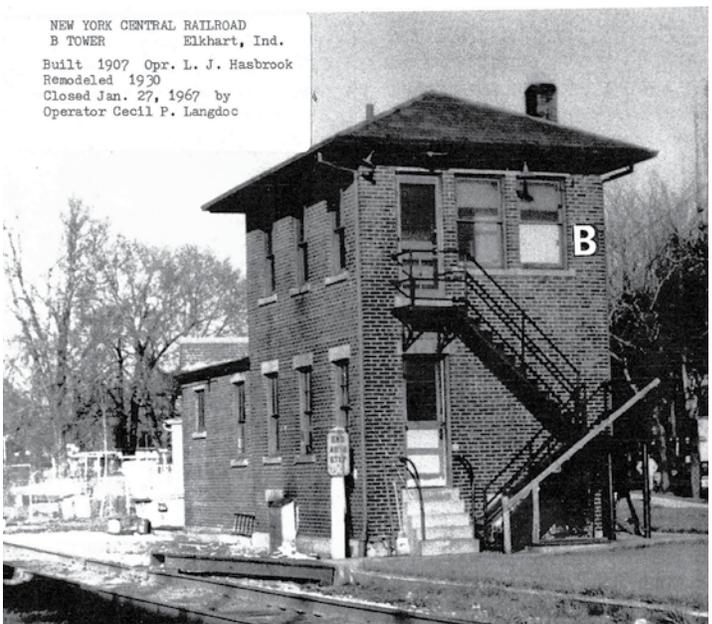


"In 1932, I purchased my first automobile, a used 1930 Model A Ford Coupe. Later on, I became interested in motor cycles," says Cecil. He later purchased a Harley Davidson motor cycle.

"In 1936, another fellow and I started out for California on our bikes. We stopped over in Cheyenne, Wyoming and hired out on the Union Pacific railroad working as tack maintenance

and repair men. We got forty cents an hour plus board and room. Our board and room were living in railroad camp cars. The food was very good."

"Before starting each day of work, we would get permission from the telegraph operator, who



in turn relayed the information from the train dispatcher. He was getting sixty cents per hour and earned it by sitting in a swivel chair and using telegraph instruments. I was getting forty cents per hour and earned it by swinging a pick and shovel. His job looked like the job made for me.”

In 1936, Cecil returned to Elkhart and enrolled in the Dodge Institute of telegraph at Valparaiso, Indiana. He successfully passed the Civil service exam and was called to work in the Elkhart post office in the fall of 1936.

Social Security became the U.S. law in 1936. Cecil worked for the government enrolling all eligible applicants in Elkhart. Cecil issued people their new Social Security numbers.

Next, Cecil returned to Valparaiso to complete his course in telegraphy and railroad accounting. In June 1937 Cecil married his sweetheart, Mary Gant.

“The depression years were still felt by big business and I tried many places to use my training. In May 1937, I went to work for the Postal Telegraph Company of Elkhart. A short time after that I took a job with Postal in Hamilton, Ohio. Not satisfied living in Hamilton, I went to California and went to work for Postal at Beverly Hills. This trip I made alone and my bride



decided to become a telegraph operator too.

In one of the photographs below, Cecil is using his “lightening Bug” which he had as far back as 1938. Al purchased this bug telegraph key from the family after Cecil passed. Al also bought two Vibrokeyers and an MFJ keyboard. Al notes that Cecil told him about being on duty during the Palm Sunday Tornado on April 11, 1965. A train was leaving Elkhart headed towards Dunlap on the outskirts between Elkhart and Goshen. Cecil found out there was considerable damage along the right-of-way. He wanted to stop the train. But there was an argument between the engineer and Cecil. The engineer told Cecil that he had no authority to stop the train. But the train finally stopped, averting a disaster, thanks to Cecil.

One day Pete and his daughter Sarah stopped by to see Cecil. Sarah sat down at Cecil’s MJF CW keyboard and started to type as fast as she could. Cecil would tell Sarah word for word what she was sending. Sarah was amazed!

“While working in Chicago eight hours a day and living in Valparaiso, I was away from home about 16 hours a day. This I did not care for, so when a third trick came open in the yard office at Elkhart, I chose to bid on it. This was in December 1941, shortly after Pearl Harbor. Mary and I moved to Elkhart in February 1942 and have lived in the same house since that time.”

“For a number of years, I worked two jobs to supplement my income. The hourly rate of the telegraph job in Elkhart was 75 cents per hour.”

“In the early 1940’s during football season, I worked for Western Union telegraphing games from Notre Dame Stadium. These stories were written during the progress of the game by newspaper reporters and in turn, I would transmit them directly to the various newspapers.”

“In 1961 I received my first Amateur Radio License and since that time have been active on the air. Also, I have a Morse Telegraph set-up which I can use on the air or take with me to give demonstrations of what a telegraph office sounded like in bygone years.”

“My retirement has been enjoyable. Mary retired in August 1977 after working 21 years in the city schools as an elementary school secretary. With our hobbies and house work, we are busy and contented.”

“The hobby of genealogy has been an interest for both of us. We have traveled many miles doing research. The people on my father’s side came to Canada in the early 1600’s. I have many dates and

places for my records.” Mary also found the records of her people coming to this country in the early 1600’s.”

“We have two sons and one daughter. The boys being born in 1943 and 1946 and daughter in 1949. We are proud of our seven grandchildren. Two live in Elkhart and we see them often. Three live in Indianapolis and two in Friendswood, Texas. The two from Texas, ages six and eight, spent ten days in Indiana during August. They came without their parents and visited in Indianapolis before coming to Elkhart.”

Again, thanks to Al Skornicka, Pete Ostapchuk, and Tom Langdoc for this story about “Doc” Landoc and his 40 years telegraph career. Enjoy the photographs. Al adds that to this day, his friend “Doc” is still missed and that Doc’s legacy lives on.

MY EARLIEST MEMORY OF THE MIRACLE OF TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION

By Warren McFarland

My father, W.W. McFarland, was agent-telegrapher for the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad (ACL) in Avon Park, FL, the small town about 70 miles south of Orlando where I grew up. Avon Park was also the Spring Training location for the Major League St. Louis Cardinals baseball team for many years. The presence of the team players in the community, staying in the newly constructed Hotel Jacaranda, the luxury resort hotel on Main Street, and the absence of any other sports made the Cardinals the Avon Park town team, and when the “Town Team” advanced to the baseball World Series in 1928, there was considerable excitement in Avon Park.

The World Series games were to be broadcast, but in those early days of radio broadcasting, there were no radio stations close enough to Avon Park to allow reception during daylight hours. Something had to be done, and it was. The electric telegraph could come to the rescue.

Western Union had an office on that part of Main Street where most of the local businesses were located. Main Street was, and still is, a divided street, with the east and westbound lanes being separated by a mile long park, or Mall as it is called locally. In that part of the Mall opposite the Western Union office, there was a small bandstand, where the high school band later

played concerts, where politicians expounded, where many local organizations held fund-raising events such as bake sales and cake-walks.

A wire was strung from the Western Union office across the westbound lanes of Main Street to the bandstand where a large blackboard was set up. The Seaboard Air Line Railway (SAL) agent, A.O.Kinsey; the Western Union office manager, whose name I never knew; and my Dad, worked shifts throughout the game, copying the feed from the Western Union wire and writing the information on the blackboard.

I have no idea what the telegraph team was copying, but I think it must have been something similar to the information which many baseball fans wrote on their scorecards when they attended baseball games in person. There was no attempt by anyone in the bandstand to create a simulated live broadcast which was common practice in those early broadcasting years. I do know that the Mall was packed around the bandstand with people laughing and talking to friends as they slowly made their way through the crowd up to the bandstand where they could read, and understand, what was being written on the blackboard by the telegrapher on duty.

I also remember running through the crowd with my younger brother and some other kids, telling

everybody we knew that it was “Our Dad” up there in that bandstand telling the whole town what was going on in the World Series.

Unfortunately, the Cardinals lost that World Series to the New York Yankees in four straight games, so the local excitement must have waned as the Series went on. I do not remember any other games being celebrated in the same manner as that first one, although that could be because my

Mother did not take us “downtown” to observe it.

I suspect that the excitement surrounding that first game may have had a subconscious effect on my decision, some ten years later, to begin learning to telegraph., a decision I have never regretted.

NOTE If anyone is interested, the bandstand on the Mall is still standing, although it has been moved one block west of its original location, but still in the Mall. Check it out on Google Street View.

MORSE TELEGRAPH CLUB BENEFITS FROM PAYPAL AND AMAZON PURCHASES

Chip Morgan, our webmaster, established Morse Telegraph Club’s “smile.amazon.com” account. A small portion of purchases made via Amazon is automatically donated to Morse Telegraph Club at no extra cost to our members. Members, remember when purchasing on-line via Amazon. Sign into “smile.amazon.com” and select Morse Telegraph Club as your charity. The endless variety of products sold by Amazon is available.

Chip also provided expertise to convert PayPal account to a “confirmed charity”. The Morse Telegraph Club now receives a discounted processing fee when members pay dues and making contributions via PayPal.

Thank you Chip for your constant endeavor to make “morsetelegraphclub.com” a relevant and vibrant website for members of the Morse Telegraph Club. See the announcement below.



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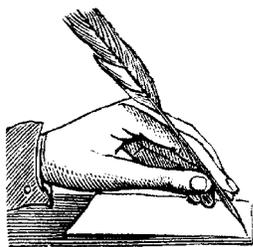
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Letters to the Editor

April 21st

After talking to the daughter of MTC member Eldon Raymond, I have come to the conclusion that he is not too well, but he enjoys reading *Dots & Dashes*.

**Don Laycock,
Secretary-Treasurer
Maple Leaf Chapter**

April 26th

Guess my hand isn't as good as it once was – you didn't get the H on my last name. But the article does have the correct spelling of my name on the bottom. (Readers, he is referring to an article, *Biography of a Telegrapher*, beginning on page 5 of the Spring issue.)

I have many other telegraph stories from different jobs: Handling mail during Christmas, Putting mail in the mail hoop for the passenger train to pick up on the fly. Getting a corpse off a train to put in the warehouse overnight until you can reach the funeral home in the morning, Sounds in the warehouse at night.

**Rich Wornath,
Secretary-Treasurer
Portland Vancouver Chapter**

May 3rd

Here is an interesting and somewhat related story about the value of Morse code. The FOX News story is titled: "Elderly couple escape Tennessee assisted living facility using Morse code training. The link is: www.apple.news/Aiz_3rT48SPud_RylkkeRg.

**Walt Mathers
MTC Member**

May 12th

Enclosed are 1) a DVD of the stations that I worked, 2) diagrams showing the measurements of telegraph stations and wiring diagrams, and 3) suggestions for improvements to the Elgin County Museum including the creation of a railway depot.

It is obvious that Bob put much thought and work into this project. We wish him success with his projects.

**73,
Robert Weare
Saint Thomas, Ontario**

May 16th

The thought has gone through my mind to buy an old ham radio and accessories then put them in a big metal potato chip can. First Energy Power Company has been buying static relays for 15 years. All transmission relays are connected to the lines by currents and voltage transformers. They have leads that are unshielded. I believe the transmission system will not bounce back. The entire FE system from Jersey to Detroit, from Virginia to New York, is controlled by a bunker. If the system control and data acquisition network is damaged, we are in the dark for a long time. I have a hand powered well pump.

**Larry Wilson,
retired First Energy power plant engineer,
regular contributor to MTC**

Read Larry's contributed article, "The Great Geomagnetic Storm of May 1921 on page 11

May 24th

Good day. I am interested in joining the Morse Telegraph Club.

My telegraph machines include two that were given to me in 1960 when I was 12 years old.

Jim Flaherty

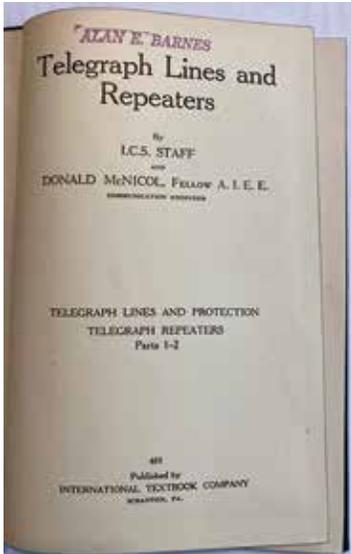
Jim Flaherty joined MTC and will receive D&D.

May 31st

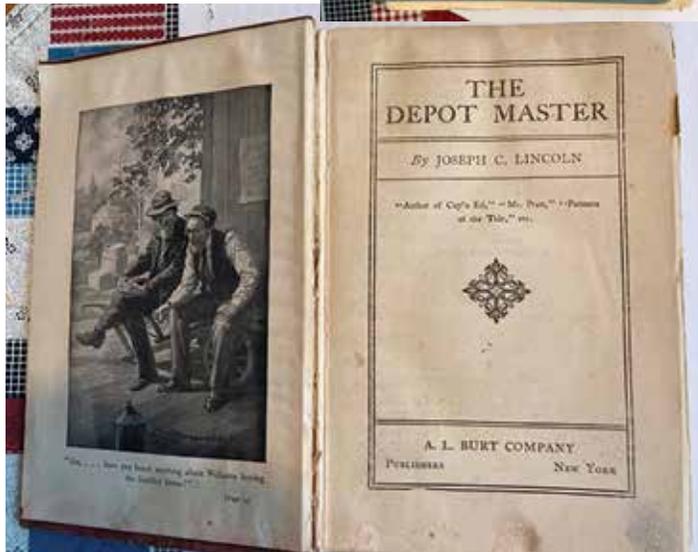
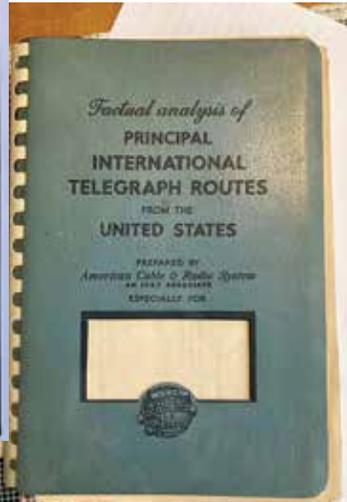
Late this morning, I opened a box marked "RR Books" that have been in transit since we left San Antonio in late December, 1989. While I did find rule books and locomotive manuals, I also found some telegraph books that I did not know that I had. To that end, I photographed them and am sharing those photos with you herewith solely as

information that you can use however you deem appropriate.

I know that I have maybe, 18 to 15 international correspondence school books about the telegraph and I haven't found those yet. I have only 18 more boxes to go through!



I've collected these books over many years and don't know what



I have in terms of value and technical importance. I got many of them in 1968 at a business supply store in Tacoma, Washington while I was a drill sergeant at North Fort Lewis, Washington. I went into this store on a whim and the books were still in unopened boxes and wrapped in original shipping paper. The store owner sold them to me at the rate of 25 cents per pound. I got brand new books about steam locomotive construction, operation, and maintenance, station agent work, station telegraph work, operating rule exams, maintenance of way activities, roundhouse operations, electric railway operations, and a

couple of other subjects that I cannot remember right now.

The book store also had a large supply of used books and you can see some of those in the photos that I've transmitted. The used books that I purchased were one-of-a-kind and thus I compromised significantly on the quality because of the subject matter, copyright year, and of course, price.

I know that I have maybe ten additional books about railroad telegraphy, telegraph equipment and its maintenance and use, and how to transmit and receive train orders and message traffic. I do not know which carton these books are in at this time. I have to progress very slowly because my physical health is not so good. I am physically weak and am having problems moving lots of heavy things at one time.

I wanted to make y'all aware of the existence of these books but I do not want to sell them at this time. However, in the future, it may become necessary for me to find homes for all of my various collections.

**Best Wishes,
Bill Neill
Conroe, Texas**

June 2nd

The proposed MTC museum would be an ideal home for my books about telegraphy as well as whatever telegraph instruments I have on hand. How would such a museum feel about some ancient teletype equipment such as two Model 15-page printers, one Model 19-page printer with perforator and transmitter-distributor, and a Model 28 KSR? I have both Teletype Corp and Army manuals for the operation and maintenance of these critters.

As I may have told you in some past email, I used these machines to copy teletypewriter traffic transmitted on radio using high grade military radio receivers and related equipment in my home. Radio teletypewriter traffic died out in the mid-1980's with the ready availability of SATCOMS and undersea coaxial cable throughout the world.

**73,
Bill Neil
Conroe, Texas**

June 4th

Just wanted to say hello and comment on a couple of things in your recent *Dots & Dashes*.

First, I was sorry to read about your wife being hospitalized because of a seizure. I hope that she is now doing well and that the cause of the seizure has been addressed. (Yes, thank you, my sweet wife, Becky, is steadily recovering from her seizure, which was found to be a side effect of one of her medications.)

Second, as you know, I am writing a book about the first telegraph company in Texas, and while doing the research, I had the pleasure of spending hours, indeed months, reading 19th century newspapers. The foregoing is a preface to a very high complement to your column. It reads very much like the *News by Telegraph* column, an 1863 Newspaper. Further to that complement, it also reads very much like the script of one of my favorite early radio reporters, Edwin R. Murrow.

I am considering writing a brief article for D&D, telling how I became interested in the telegraph. This happened at the tender age of about six.

Before writing the article, I have a question related to the article, which I would like to have answered. I grew up in Houston and we lived in a railroad community. About five blocks north of my house was what we called a switching yard. So, I lived with the sounds associated with the making up of trains, day and night. A sign on one of the buildings in that yard read "Eureka Texas." I don't know why. I seem to remember that some railroad companies named part of their work areas as though they were a town. What knowest thou about that? Also, I was introduced to telegraph in that yard and I have always wondered if there is a way to find the call sign on that station and why the place was called Eureka, Texas.

**Best,
Durrell Roth**

June 5th

Hi Durrell. It seems we have a lot of Eureka's out there. The best evidence that I've found is a location a little northwest of Houston, where I do see a small yard. If that is near your former homestead, likely the place that you remember.

It looks like at one time this was a much larger facility. The tracks currently end at the east end of the yard, but there is a hike/bike trail that continues east, likely along the former ROW into downtown Houston. Near Houston, I've found two railroads with a location called Eureka. The Southern Pacific SP and the Missouri Kansas Texas, MKT. I could be wrong, but I think they may

both be the same place, again a little northwest of downtown Houston.

The SP called the place Eureka and the MKT called it Eureka Tower. Both list the same telegraph call, KA. Since just a bit west of the yard it looks like two railroads crossed, a joint interlocking tower might very well be that location. The Eureka Yard office, however, on the MKT had the call KU and if you saw telegraph operation in a yard office that could be it. Further, my telegraph office call listings for the SP don't show a yard in that area, although frankly, that doesn't mean much. And to put the icing on the cake, Google satellites view labels the yard "Eureka Yard" and show it as now being operated by the Union Pacific.

As a funny side story, I said there are a lot of Eureka's out here and a few have telegraph calls. There is one just east of Saint Louis on the Missouri Pacific (MOPAC) and its call is also KA, almost an obvious call for a location called Eureka.

**73,
Chris Hausler
MTC International Vice President**

June 8th

Good morning. I am looking into alternates for Canadian mailing for you. As of now, we are shipping with International Postal Services, which makes sure everything is set up correct for international mailing. It is sent from there as First-Class Canadian mail. So far, what I have found is the fastest way to get it there would be to use UPS. It has one shipment to a contact in Canada that from there could do the mailing. Is this something you think you might be interested in? I will keep looking around for ideas for you. The mail right now is very behind, so add sending to another country and it is even more delayed.

**Josh,
McClung Printers**

McClung prints our quarterly Dots & Dashes journal for us. ~Jim

June 11th

Hi. I finally received the Spring edition of D&D today. There must be something wrong with the postal service, either Canada Post or the U.S. Postal Service.

I was quite amused at having two titles: "Former International President" and "Former Secretary Treasurer (of the Maple Leaf Chapter)." My first letter (of two) seemed to be a bit mixed up as

it didn't mention Barbara Sterritt's last name. Barbara is a really remarkable lady and her husband was a well-known Indian Chief who lived to be over 100 years old.

On another note, I have tried to join the two Morse groups without success – one started by Greg Raven. I haven't been on the KOB as my small desk won't accommodate a Morse sounder and key (which I like to use) as I have very limited space in this seniors' residence, just barely enough room for a small laptop and printer.

Hope you all have survived without catching Covid.

73,
Lavina Shaw

June 25th

Richaard Williams tells me that I am the newest MTC member. So, I look forward to receiving my first issue of *Dots & Dashes*. I am working on my military impression as a Civil War Telegrapher for living history and re-enactments.

Attached is a document describing my first project for these history programs. I thought you might be interested. My next project is building a "sounder resonator. Let me know if you guys are interested in seeing this upon completion.

Jim Flaherty.

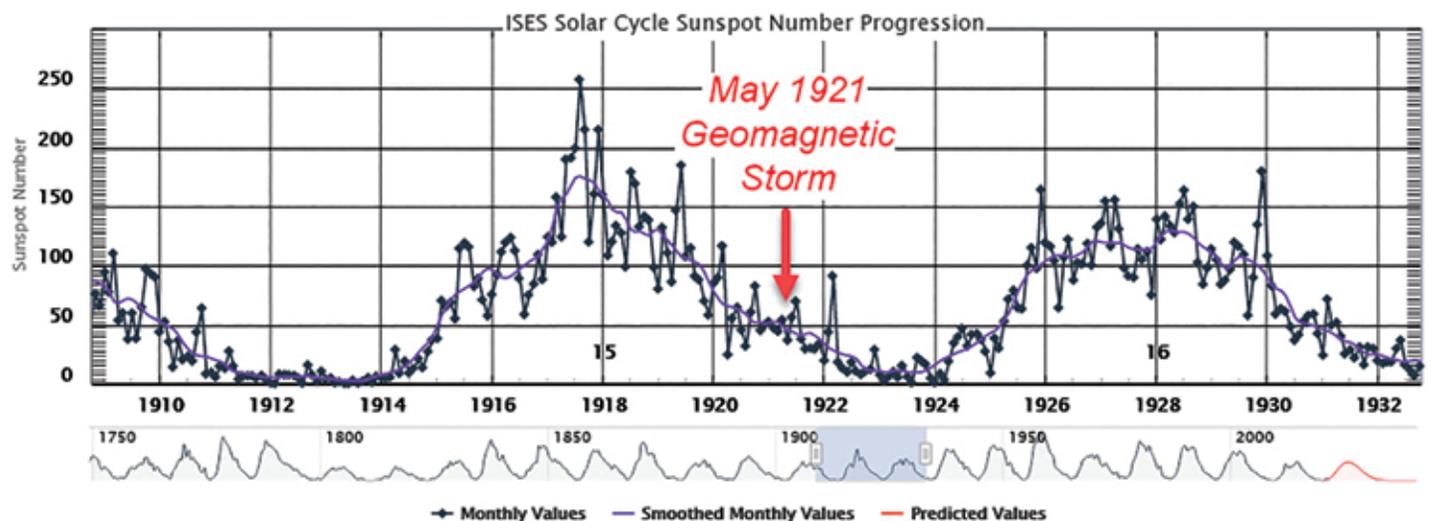
100 YEARS LATER: THE GREAT GEOMAGNETIC STORM OF MAY 1921

By Dr. Tony Phillips

May 15, 2021: You know a solar storm is serious when buildings burst into flame. Sounds crazy? It really happened 100 years ago today.

On May 15, 1921, the biggest solar storm of the 20th century hit Earth. Around 02:00 GMT that Sunday morning a telegraph exchange in Sweden burst into

flames. Across the Atlantic, the same thing was going on in New York. Flames engulfed the switch-board at the Brewster station of the Central New England Railroad and quickly spread to destroy the whole building. During the conflagration, long distance telephone lines burned out in New Brunswick; voltages on telegraph lines in the



USA spiked as high as 1000 V; and auroras were sighted by ships at sea crossing the equator. It was a Big. Solar. Storm.

The outburst happened during the lazy tail end of Solar Cycle 15, an unremarkable cycle that was almost over in 1921. Sunspot numbers were low—but it only took one. Giant sunspot AR1842 appeared in mid-May and started flaring, hurling multiple coronal mass ejections (CMEs) toward Earth. In those days scientists had never heard of “CMEs,” so they were completely surprised when the clouds of plasma struck Earth. Around the world, magnetometers suddenly went offscale, pens in strip chart recorders pegged uselessly to the tops of their papers.

In response to the pummeling, Earth’s magnetic field swayed back and forth, rippling with energy. Fires were a direct result. Physics 101: When a magnetic field changes rapidly, electricity flows through conductors in the area. It’s called “magnetic induction.” Early 20th century telegraph lines suddenly found themselves buzzing with induced currents. In Sweden and New York, wires grew so hot they ignited telegraph papers and other combustibles.

What would happen if the same storm struck today? A 2013 Royal Academy of Engineering report summarizes the possibilities. Suffice it to say, fire would be the least of our worries. Modern technology is far more sensitive to solar activity than the simple copper wires of 1921. The same solar storm today could black out regional power grids, expose air travelers to radiation, knock out satellites, and disable radio-based technologies such as GPS.

Loss of electricity is often cited as the worst likely side-effect of a solar superstorm, but power systems are more

resilient than they used to be. Thanks to improvements made after the Great Quebec Blackout of 1989, many modern grids would bounce back quickly. A more worrisome loss might be GPS. We think of GPS as our main way of finding things: ambulances finding accidents, pilots finding runways, and so on. But there’s more to it than that. GPS tells us what time it is, a service of atomic clocks onboard the satellites. In fact, GPS time is woven into the fabric of modern society.

Consider the following paragraph from a report in the Atlantic entitled “What Happens if GPS Fails?”

“Telecom networks rely on GPS clocks to keep cell towers synchronized so calls can be passed between them. Many electrical power grids use the clocks in equipment that fine-tunes current flow in overloaded networks. The finance sector uses GPS-derived timing systems to timestamp ATM, credit card, and high-speed market transactions. Computer network synchronization, digital television and radio, Doppler radar weather reporting, seismic monitoring, even multi-camera sequencing for film production—GPS clocks have a hand in all.”

“What if all these flying clock radios were wiped out, and everything on the ground started blinking 12:00?” asks the author, Dan Glass. Answer: “Nobody knows.”

Space weather scholars routinely call the May 1921 event a “100 year storm.” However, recent research (both historical and statistical) suggests that such storms come along more often—every 40 to 60 years. Either way, we’re overdue.

Happy 100th anniversary, May 1921!

Newspaper Headlines

May 15, 1921

SUNSPOT CREDITED WITH RAIL TIE-UP
New York Central Signal System Put Out of Service by Play of Northern Lights.

The sunspot which caused the brilliant aurora borealis on Saturday night and the worst electrical disturbance in memory on the telegraph systems was credited with an unprecedented thing at 7:04 o'clock yesterday morning, when the entire signal and switching system of the New York Central Railroad below 125th Street was put out of operation, followed by a fire in the control tower at Fifty-seventh Street and Park Avenue. This is the first time that a sunspot has been blamed for such a piece of mischief. From other accounts it appeared

The New York Times
 Published May 16, 1921
 Copyright © The New York Times



Aurora Borealis Plays Tricks on Telegraph Wires
 Electrical Experts Baffled by Extra Voltage from Air—Visible in Pennsylvania.

WIRES HIT BY THE AURORA BOREALIS

Telegraph Service Throughout United States Badly Crippled by Northern Lights—West and South Feel Effects Most—Reported as Brilliantly Visible Between Scranton and Pittsburgh. **Buffalo Courier.**

REMEMBERING THE BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL F.B. MORSE

By Jim Wilson

Samuel Morse lived from 1791 to 1872. He is credited with the invention of the telegraph. But he had a lot of help. Morse borrowed ideas from his partner Alfred Vail and other knowledgeable people of that era. Morse could not have done it alone.

Do you know that Alfred Vail actually invented Morse code?



In this May 1991 photograph, the Secretary-Treasurer of the Washington-Baltimore "WA" Chapter of the Morse telegraph Club, Lynn C. Wilson, taps out a message using the original telegraph key which was used in May 1844 by Samuel Morse at his demonstration of the telegraph to Congress.

Judge Robert F. B. Morse, the Great-Great Grandson of Samuel Morse, attended the Morse Bicentennial Celebration in the Capitol of the United States at Washington, DC. On Thursday May 23, 1991. That was thirty years ago as of this year. I was there with my dad, Lynn C. Wilson, who was Secretary-Treasurer for the Washington-Baltimore Chapter of the Morse Telegraph Club.

Thirty- seven people are listed as "Honored Guests," including my dad and Roger Reinke, both representing the Morse Telegraph Club. Roger later became the International Secretary-Treasurer for MTC and Roger later invented the 911 national emergency calling system. Roger had an extensive collection of telegraph

instruments, some objects so pristine that national museums routinely borrowed them for display.

Good memories of that event include the program, which I hold in my hand as I write this story. I share this with you.

The Smithsonian brought out of their storage safe, Samuel Morse's original telegraph instrument for

this event and tapped out "What Hath God Wrought." I snapped a photo of my dad with the original Morse telegraph key. The photograph made it into the local newspapers, an article titled, "Key to History."

The Architect of the U.S. Capitol, George M. White, ham call W3HDO, was among the attending guests. So was

Elliot Sivowitch K3RJA, representing the Smithsonian. And David G. Summer, K1ZZ represented the American Radio Relay League. Some of the attendees knew Morse code, at least the International Morse code, if not the original American Morse code. Concluding remarks for this program event were made by the Honorable George White, W3HDO, Architect of the Capitol.

But here is a secret from that prestigious event. I have kept this secret for thirty years. I asked Judge Samuel F. B. Morse this question: "Do you know Morse code?" With an embarrassing look on his face, Judge Morse answered, "No."

Ah, memories.

PROGRAM

For the
Bicentennial Celebration
of the birth of
Samuel F. B. Morse (1791-1872)
in the
Capitol of the United States
Washington, D.C.



Thursday, May 23, 1991
at 10:45 o'clock a.m.

Sponsored by
The Capitol Hill Amateur Radio Society

Samuel F. B. Morse Bicentennial Celebration Honored Guests

The Honorable Mark O. Hatfield, Senator from Oregon
The Honorable Charlie Rose, Congressman from North Carolina
The Honorable George M. White, W3HDO, Architect of the Capitol
The Honorable Fred Schwengel, U.S. Capitol Historical Society
Harry F. Manbeck, Jr., Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Judge Robert F. B. Morse, Great-Great-Grandson of Samuel F. B. Morse
Jo Ann Morse, Wife of Judge Robert F. B. Morse
Alfred S. Vail, Great-Grandson of Alfred Vail
John C. Walters, Western Union Financial Services, Inc.
James L. Bellis, Jr., Historic Speedwell
Richard McDermott Miller, National Academy of Design
Barbara A. Wolanin, Capitol Curator, Architect of the Capitol
Richard A. Baker, Senate Commission on Art
John B. Odell, Senate Curator's Office
William C. Allen, Historian, Architect of the Capitol
Donald A. Ritchie, Senate Historical Office
Gayle Cory, Postmaster of the Senate
Carlene Stephens, Smithsonian Institution
Arthur P. Mollera, Smithsonian Institution
Bernard S. Finn, Smithsonian Institution
Elliot Sivovitch, K3RJA, Smithsonian Institution
Robert York, Smithsonian Institution
Louis D. Boccardi, The Associated Press
Ralph B. Haller, N4RH, Federal Communications Commission
John B. Johnston, W3BE, Federal Communications Commission
Thomas P. Stanley, Federal Communications Commission
Charles Oliver, National Telecommunications and Information Administration
David G. Sumner, K1ZZ, American Radio Relay League
Thomas Connors, The Journal of Commerce
John H. Ott, B&O Railroad Museum
Roger W. Reinke, Morse Telegraph Club
Lynn C. Wilson, K4DHB, Morse Telegraph Club
Don Daso, WA8MAZ, Potomac Valley Radio Club
Alfred A. Laun III, K3ZO, The First Class CW Operators' Club
B. Roland McElroy, K4OCL, Capitol Hill Amateur Radio Society
George R. Stephens, WB3DAG, Capitol Hill Amateur Radio Society
The Rev. Richard C. Halverson, Jr., Son of the Chaplain of the Senate

Organizers of the Bicentennial Celebration

Warren R. Bechtel, New Valley Corp. William O. Hider, N3RR
Kenneth R. Dewhurst, K3IWE Peter L. Huber, K3ZR
Frank Donovan, W3LPL Boyd W. Humphrey, Western Union
Lawrence T. Fadner, W3GN David R. Siddall, K3ZJ

PROCEEDINGS

Welcome	David Siddall, Honorary President, Capitol Hill Amateur Radio Society
Invocation	Reverend Richard C. Halverson Chaplain of the Senate
Introduction of the Honorable George M. White, Architect of the Capitol	David Siddall
Recognition of dignitaries present	Honorable George M. White
Historical perspective	Frank Donovan, Chairman, Bicentennial Celebration Committee
Re-enactment of Samuel F. B. Morse's transmission: "What hath God wrought!" The Honorable George M. White, Architect of the Capitol, will transmit the "What hath God wrought!" message. The message was selected by Miss Annie Ellsworth, the daughter of the Commissioner of Patents. Today her role will be played by Mrs. Jo Ann Morse, wife of Judge Robert F. B. Morse. The message will be received at the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore, Maryland, on the site where Alfred Vail received the original message.	
Remarks	Judge Robert F. B. Morse, Great-Great-Grandson of Samuel F. B. Morse
Remarks	Henry F. Manbeck, Jr. Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Remarks	John C. Walters, Vice President, Western Union Financial Services, Inc.
Remarks	David G. Sumner, Executive Vice President, American Radio Relay League
Concluding remarks	Honorable George M. White

A LOOK BACK...

by J. Chris Hausler

This is the third in a series of occasional columns looking at bits and pieces of the history of the Morse Telegraph Club. As the club originally was started as a fraternal organization



there was no substantial effort made to document the history of the club itself. However, along the way some members have recorded some of our history. Shortly before he passed former MTC GST Keith LeBaron sent me a CD-R containing a number of scans of old MTC documents as well

as some hard copy material that he and others had collected. Although not sufficient to develop a cogent history of the organization as a whole they can make for an enlightening look at it. In this column I will examine several such sources.

The first is a document written by former MTC president Bill Dunbar. Although undated, it mentions both his elevation to president of the MTC and the annual provision by Western Union of a wire interconnecting all of our chapters, so it must have been written in the mid to late 1980's. Here it is verbatim:

The Morse Telegraph Club, started in the state of California, in 1942, in the month of April, coinciding with the birthdate of Prof. Samuel Finley Breese Morse, who was born on April 27, 1791. Prof. Morse was the inventor of the Morse Telegraph Code as well as the instruments (key and sounder) to transmit and receive the code, with an operator at each end of the circuit.

The California group diligently proceeded with the club idea, and enlarged it to encompass chapters in many other cities in the U.S.A, plus 3 in Canada. There are now 5 chapters in California.

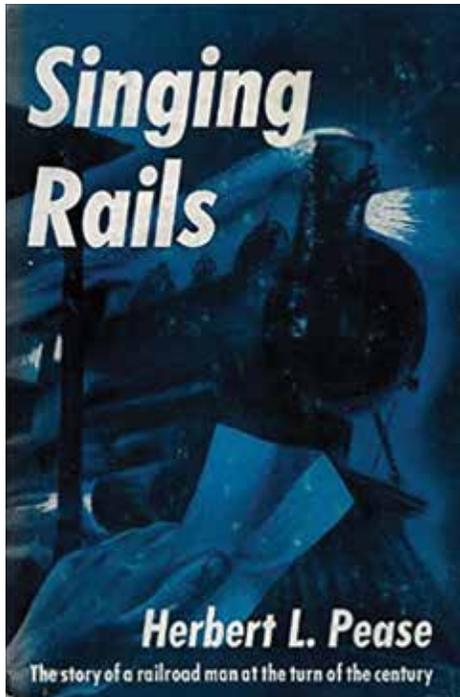
One president, who many still remember, was Otto Hugh Braese, he lived in Fresno, and was largely responsible for enlarging the club to the

chapter idea, and he also printed a quarterly official publication for its members. It was always called *Dots & Dashes*. Braese, himself belonged to many chapters, as he had friends in many cities, having been a train dispatcher, and later the president of the "ATDA", a train dispatchers organization. He passed on in 1972, and the continuation of the club, looked bleak, as other officials would not take over the presidency. Cecil D. Combs of Lincoln, Nebraska, stepped forward and agreed to become the president, and the editor of the *Dots & Dashes*. He was still working at the Burlington Northern Railroad in Chicago at the time, as the top communications man for the company. He named A. J. Long of Salem, Illinois, a 42 year veteran of Western Union as the Grand Secretary – Treasurer, and he still remains in this position. Combs died June 23, 1984. After his death, the board of directors of the club, elected William K. Dunbar, as president, having just retired as dispatcher for the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad, at Normal, Illinois. He still lives there, and continues to be busy at work for the club, directing its course, and editing the *Dots & Dashes*. After the death of Braese, and Combs living in Illinois at the time, the "Grand Chapter" was moved from California to Illinois, and was incorporated under the laws of the state of Illinois, with non-profit status. The re-incorporation date was January 15, 1973.

The club membership has grown over the years, even though many of the older members have passed away, but with the new ruling that amateur radio operators (ham operators) be accepted, was responsible for holding membership figures. There are now about 2,700 members in the U.S. and Canada, with 3 radio members in continental Europe.

The last Saturday in April of each year, the Western Union Telegraph Company, cheerfully gives the club a nation-wide Morse circuit that has the facilities in their city to meet the circuit. This too, is in memory of Prof. Morse's birthday, and is graciously received by the membership, with a big thank you, to Western Union for its efforts and expense. Although the Morse circuit is a very simple one, it was the beginning of things to come, such as, Western Union's gigantic network of

C.R.T. stations, computers, exchange facilities, and satellite switching.



The second item for this column concerns the author of a book I reviewed in the spring 2010 issue of *Dots & Dashes*. The book is titled, "Singing Rails" by Herbert L. Pease and is his autobiography of becoming a railroad telegrapher at the dawn of the 20th

Century. Pease got his start, as was common back then, by cubbing the job until the agent under which he was working thought him ready. He takes his wire and rule book tests and was put on the extra board. As he is traveling home after passing the tests he wonders how long it will be before he gets a paying position but is surprised to learn when he gets home that there is a telegram waiting, ordering him to immediately assume the night shift at a small town depot.

On arrival at this first assignment, the day operator just more or less throws him the keys and leaves without even showing him around the station. While wondering what he has gotten himself into, he hears a sudden commotion at the door of the depot. An obviously inebriated young man busts in and asks for the night operator. When Pease identifies himself as such, the young man pulls out a gun and takes a shot at him. To make a long story short, the reason Pease got the sudden posting was because the previous night operator had gotten a local girl in, as they used to say, a family way, and upon learning this skipped town. The young man was the girl's brother out for revenge against the night operator, except he got the wrong one. Fortunately the gunshot missed (else I wouldn't have been reading Pease's autobiography) but I like to say that Pease started his railroad career with a bang!

At the time of my review I knew no more about

Pease than that he had authored the book but it turns out he was a respected member of the MTC and in fact its historian. In a letter covering a number of topics sent to "All Officers" and dated May 27, 1956 then executive secretary/treasurer C. H. Meador included the sentence, "As outlined some time ago, our beloved Historian, Bro. Herbert L. Pease, because of continued ill health and injuries, has had to relinquish his post." The book is a good read and used copies of it are readily available.

The third item for this column concerns a video made roughly 20 years ago at the Silver Creek & Stephenson Railroad (www.thefreeportshow.com/scs.htm), a museum railroad operated by The Stephenson County Antique Engine Club and located in Freeport, IL. For you history buffs Freeport is also where the train order fork was first conceived and developed by the "High Speed Delivery Fork Co.", before they moved to Shelbyville, IN. The video features MTC members Keith LeBaron, Lester Fouke and Jim Adkins demonstrating telegraphy at the museum. This video was made by MTC member Norm Aulabaugh who is also a volunteer at the museum and he is also shown in the video as a conductor on the train. The video can be seen here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvbfS00NT4g.



Standing, L-R, Chris Hausler, Bill Dunbar, Carl Storey, Bill Hannah, Larry Huml, Mel Schiller and Les Fouke. Seated, Keith LeBaron

When I first joined the MTC in fall 2001, Jim was president of the organization and Keith was GST. All were members of the then Grand Chapter which at the time met every six months in Rochelle, IL. As there was no chapter near me, as was the practice at the time, I was put into the

Grand Chapter. Wanting to know more about the club, I flew out to Chicago the following spring and attended their 2002 Morse Day meeting where I met Keith, Lester and Jim. Sadly, as the video mentions, all three of them have since passed away.

In summer 2003 while working at a job site for the Belt Railway of Chicago in that city, I learned from Keith that he would be demonstrating telegraphy at the Silver Creek & Stephenson the weekend of June 14 and 15. As I would be in Chicago then, that Saturday morning I drove out to Freeport. There I met up with Keith and MTC member Barney Baxter who was holding down the other end of the wire that day. In addition to witnessing their telegraph demonstration I rode the train behind the museum's nicely maintained Heisler geared steam locomotive. The museum train operates on a formerly abandoned section of the Milwaukee Road on which they've relaid a couple miles of track. Barney was also demonstrating the hooping up of orders up to their engine. This visit led to my first article in *Dots & Dashes* in the Summer/Fall 2003 edition which was titled, "Hoopin' em up on the Silver Creek & Stephenson". Both Keith and Barney were pictured in the article.

As a kind of follow-on to this third item, after that first visit to Rochelle I attended several more of the Morse Day meetings in Rochelle over the

next decade. At some time mid that decade it was decided to end the Grand Chapter and put all its now widely scattered members in a group called "Members at Large", those not associated with a specific chapter. Sometimes, however, this group is still called the Grand Chapter. That said, some of us who lived in the area, or like me were willing to travel there, still wanted to meet in person on Morse Day and decided to form a new local chapter in Rochelle, the RC Chapter. Bill Dunbar became its first president and Keith LeBaron its secretary/treasurer.

The last actual in person meeting of the Rochelle Chapter took place on Morse Day 2009 as shown in the photo. Both Keith and Les Fouke as well as Bill Dunbar and several other members were present. At this meeting Bill Dunbar stepped down as president and I assumed that position. Although that was the last in person meeting, the chapter continued until November 2013 when Keith, due to his failing health, decided he could no longer perform the duties of secretary/treasurer and so we closed the chapter. That same week I heard from then MTC vice president George Nixon asking if I was willing to assume the vice presidency of the MTC, a move that was formalized at an MTC board meeting that December. So I've been your International Vice President since the beginning of 2014. And now you know the rest of the story.

Welcome Aboard!

NEW MEMBERS OF MTC

James Flaherty of Green Acres, FL

Bill Neill of Conroe, TX



DID YOU KNOW?

Do You Know That The Morse Telegraph Club Has A Fantastic Upgraded Website?

Yes, MTC member Chip Morgan has upgraded our MTC website. If you own a computer, check out MorseTelegraphClub.com.

And do you know that ham radio technology & operators may save the world?

Read the LETTER dated May 16th.

CHAPTER NEWS

Although most of our MTC chapters have been shut down during the past year because of the pandemic, a few are beginning to emerge. When COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted, please resume club activities and send us a few words about your club activities.

Thomas Edison “TD” Memorial Chapter

Bob Hibbard, the “TD” Chapter President, and Al Skornicka the TD Chapter Secretary-Treasurer agreed to donate \$500 out of their chapter funds to support the publication of Dots & Dashes. This is the third donation of \$500 from the TD Chapter to the Morse Telegraph Club in recent years.

Thank you, Bob and Al, for the generous club donations.

Members at Large “GC” Chapter

Chip Morgan has updated the MTC website, including an Amazon Smile banner.

Google MorseTelegraphClub.com.

***Thank you, Chip.
(See Chips Want Ad on page 22.)***

Evergreen Chapter

The Seattle-Tacoma (SX) Evergreen Chapter of the Morse Telegraph Club is alive and well through the pandemic, courtesy of online Zoom activities coordinated by our very talented and extremely appreciated member Les Kerr of Seattle (Les is of course the inventor of the MorseKOB software and associated interface circuitry). The chapter has consistently held semi-annual meetings in April and October for over 70 years. The meetings were always in-person at a restaurant until more recently, prior to the pandemic, when a number of meetings were at the Foss Waterway Seaport Museum in Tacoma that is housed in a renovated Northern Pacific Railway warehouse built in 1900 for the transfer of goods to and from ships.

In October 2019, we had our last in-person meeting at the Poodle Dog Restaurant in Fife (the chapter’s long-time meeting place since 1942) with ten members present. A number of telecommunications-related museums were discussed, with six identified in western Washington. Les Kerr presented information on OS reports. Recently completed exhibits at events included Snoqualmie Railroad Days in August 2019, where Kevin Saville exhibited telegraph equipment in a railroad passenger car and a Morse

dialog occurred between Les Kerr in North Bend and Saville in Snoqualmie.

With the pandemic spreading in earnest in March 2020, we decided to switch to an online presence for our April 2020 meeting. This change allowed distant MTC members to participate in Evergreen Chapter meetings for the first time; we had four regulars and five from outside the region. We recognized the completion of telegraph exhibits at the last two pre-pandemic train shows in December ’19 and January ’20. Richard Williams and Chris Hausler provided Grand Chapter news. Les Kerr presented information on his work to provide Italian news in Morse Code, Derek Cohn showed his collection of telegraph keys, and Ed Trump showed us around his office in Fairbanks, Alaska.

In October 2020, the Evergreen Chapter met on both the 24th and 31st. At the first meeting, we opened with eight chapter members online and especially discussed the chapter’s finances as our longstanding secretary-treasurer, Betty Watterson, had announced she needed to resign the position. Various methods of addressing the chapter’s treasury were discussed and it was decided to postpone a decision and election of officers to the next Saturday. Following the chapter’s business meeting, Les Kerr hosted an open house with a great turnout by ten MTC members from around the U.S. and western Canada. Everyone introduced themselves with some insight into their telegraph experience. Chris Hausler showed photos of experiences riding private railroad cars from 2011-2016. This was followed by Les Kerr presenting an update on MorseKOB 2.5 and 4.0. At the second meeting on Halloween, the chapter members present elected chapter officers for 2021 and decided to have International Secretary-Treasurer Richard Williams manage chapter funds in the International MTC’s account. Due to present-day government requirements for a club account, this was the best option, and the Evergreen Chapter very much appreciates Williams’ assistance.

On May Day 2021, the Evergreen Chapter held its last meeting with seven chapter members

present and Richard Williams representing the Grand Chapter. The chapter grew by one member to now have twenty members on the roster with one in Alaska, Arizona, Idaho, and Oregon, and two in Colorado. Richard Williams provided a great update on international operations. Upcoming events were discussed and Les Kerr presented his work on developing a tailored version of MorseKOB, called MorseFWS, for use at the Foss Waterway Seaport Museum's Northern Pacific heritage section where a new telegraph exhibit will be installed by June for the reopening of the museum. Kerr developed MorseFWS to run on a RaspberryPI miniature computer; Kevin Saville demonstrated the system during the meeting prior to installation in the museum.

On June 5, the Foss Museum telegraph exhibit was completed with MorseFWS; when a visitor pushes on a telegraph key, MorseFWS transmits a train order in Morse Code with a cadence identical to the dispatcher who originally sent it in 1962. The exhibit includes two sounders and one relay

activated by MorseFWS, along with a display sounder, two keys, a Vibroplex bug, and an N.P. train order—most with known provenance to Northern Pacific Railway operations. An overhead monitor shows photos of telegraph stations and operators on the N.P.'s Tacoma subdivision and a binder encloses N.P. employee timetables from 1900 and 1950, a list of Tacoma division telegraph offices gleaned from the 1950 timetable, and the Order of Railroad Telegrapher's Seniority List of Telegraphers for the Northern Pacific's relay and Tacoma divisions and veterans dating from 1949 and 1961.

In closing, the Evergreen Chapter membership continues to look for opportunities to exhibit and educate about telegraphy whenever and wherever the opportunity may be. We appreciate all that the international officers do to make the Morse Telegraph Club a viable organization and will continue to promote it in the Pacific Northwest.

News submitted by Kevin Saville

President's Line continued from page 3

the isolation and hardening methods implemented by the Bell System to ensure survivability of these important networks. Most of these techniques aren't worth mentioning here, but one of the more amusing projects, which our ham radio operator members will appreciate, involved the installation of complete HF radio systems atop major telephone exchanges throughout the country to facilitate a sort of "doomsday" net that could be utilized to coordinate and prioritize the restoration of long-lines.

Even ham radio operators are becoming increasingly reliant on computers and automated systems. Programs such as "Winlink" are being used extensively by Amateur Radio emergency communications groups. Winlink is an excellent tool, which allows a radio operator in the field to connect to the Internet and transmit and receive email on behalf of served agencies. However, unlike radiotelegraph or voice nets, which offer a high degree of decentralization and dispersal, Winlink, despite its disadvantages, exhibits some duality of its design. In exchange for a higher level of automation and efficiency, message traffic must be concentrated on certain nodes (frequencies), which would be in high demand during a widespread disaster, the result being a "traffic jam;" the radio equivalent of what one sees in a construction zone on an expressway. Likewise,

Winlink is also reliant on the Internet, which limits some of the benefits of compartmentalization. On the other hand, emergency communications organizations that retain some of the "old" skills, such as radiotelegraph and HF voice networks would likely have an advantage in the event of a catastrophic incident.

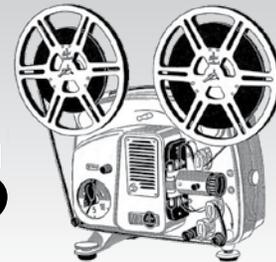
This is perhaps a long way around to a basic concept. Much can be learned by examining the evolution of telecommunications technology. Historical perspective can support strategic thinking and perhaps prevent a degree of generational myopia, which is common amongst engineers and policy makers. This is one of the many reasons MTC exists. Every time we present a talk on the evolution of the telegraph industry, there is a potential that some in the audience will not just walk away with an appreciation for the contributions of the telegraph industry, but perhaps with a broadened perspective that will have a beneficial impact on modern methods.

Ultimately, even technological and engineering decisions are made by human beings who, in doing so inject their own bias and perspective. These influences can result in both good and bad outcomes, so let's do our part to expand their perspective by carrying on our historical and educational outreach.

73, Jim Wades



J. Chris Hausler's BOOK & MOVIE REVIEWS



Have you ever heard the phrase, “19 East, Copy Three”. If you recognize what that statement means and all that underlies it, you may not learn all that much from the book of this title I am reviewing in this column. However, as timetable and train order operation hasn’t been practiced on real railroads now in over 35 years, even if you once were a dispatcher, operator or train crew subject to such operation, you may find that this book, subtitled, *The Art and Practice of Timetable & Train Order Operations for the Railroad Historian and Modeler* to be of interest. And for many of us, even those of us like myself who spent their entire working lives in the railroad industry but who never had to deal with any of this on a daily basis, this book could be an eye-opener.

The book is co-authored by Steve King and MTC member Dave Sprau and was published by OpSIG, the Operations Special Interest Group (www.opsig.org) in 2015.

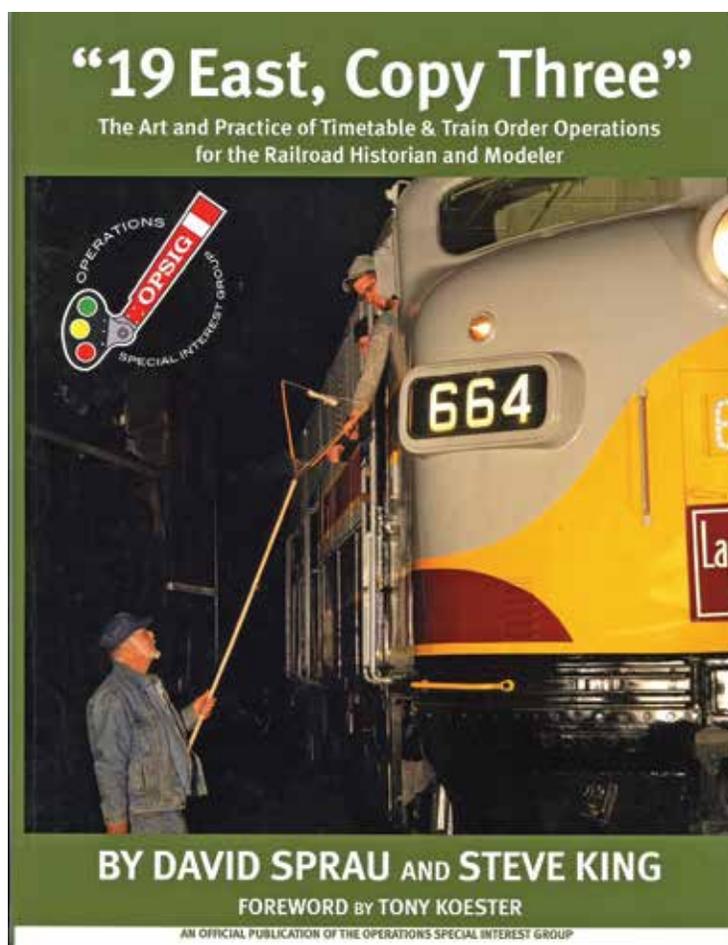
Back in the spring 2018 issue of *Dots & Dashes* I reviewed another then just released book by this group who are model railroaders focused on operating their models in a prototypically correct manner. As I said in that column, “Prototype” is the term modelers use to describe the “real railroad”. That book was an overview of the issues faced and approaches taken by modelers in

achieving this end and addresses various different ways in which real railroads have been and are operated including modern centralized traffic control. This book “19 East, Copy Three” is a deep dive into the whys and ways of implementing TT&TO operation both in general and in a model railroading environment. Although officially out

of print, it is still listed on the Northern Pacific Railway Historical Association at this link: store.nprha.org/19-east-copy-three/. I have also occasionally found used copies available from Amazon and other such sources. Current availability is apparently limited and you may have to search a bit.

The book is essentially divided into two sections, the first by Mr. Sprau focuses on TT&TO operation as it was used on the prototype railroads and the second by Mr. King looks at implementing such operation on model railroads with many specific suggestions and options. Both sections feature example

forms and procedures and include interesting photographs. As I said about the other book published by OpSIG, this one also illustrates the seriousness with which these folks address their hobby, an approach which might best be described as “total immersion”. It strongly supports that old cliché, “you only get out of something what you put into it”, and this group puts a lot of



effort into their hobby. What's more, as again TT&TO operation has now been absent from real railroading for a long time now, if you want to experience it for the first time or even relive it if you once did experience it, modeling is the only avenue available anymore. And the jobs available are the similar to what they always were, dispatcher, train order operator and train crew.

So if you are interested, its time to get out the rule book and study up. Fortunately, thanks to the

fact that it is a modeled environment, even if you screw up you won't kill anyone in a wreck. That said, headlight meets are still an embarrassment and as the book says, can be "illuminating". The smooth running of even the model requires a detailed understanding of TT&TO operation. In fact although not the equivalent of the annual rules exam, this book concludes with an exam to test your knowledge of what you have learned. So sharpen up those pencils and get to work!

"30" SILENT KEYS

News of our brothers and sisters who have closed the key



Edmonton "MO" Chapter

JOSEPH T. MYCHALUK, almost age 90, passed from life on March 14, 2021. Joe was born on March 31, 1931 in Edmonton. His early life was spent along the Canadian National Railway tracks in small communities from Kamloops to Jasper. His teenage years were spent in Vancouver, where he graduated in 1949 from Kitsilano High School. After graduation, Joe went to work for the CN in Northern British Columbia. But an accident, a broken ankle, caused him to return to Vancouver to recuperate. Then Joe returned to Vancouver as an Operator with the Canadian National Railroad. Next, he became a Dispatcher and finally he finished his RR career in Kamloops as the Chief Train Dispatcher. This was in 1988 after nearly 40 years of railroad service.

Joe spent his retirement traveling, snowbirding in Texas, golfing and curling. He was a wonderful cook who was not shy about trying something new to test on the rest of his family.

Joseph is survived by his wife of 63 years and by his daughters Suzanne and Donna, plus grandchildren.

Thanks to Joe's daughter, Suzanne Bossio for this information. Suzanne adds, "Sweet dreams, Dad."

C.D. Combs "FN" Chapter

LAVERN LABENZ, age 95, became a Silent Key on January 22, 2021. He was born on March 20, 1926 in Humphrey, Nebraska. Lavern grew up on a dairy farm, so delivering milk was one of his chores.

Lavern was a World War II veteran, spending 15 months on the island of Okinawa, Japan. He then worked for the Union Pacific Railroad for many years. He was also a longtime member of the Morse Telegraph Club and attended many of the chapter annual meetings. Lavern was also a longtime amateur radio operator.

Thanks to Richard Behrens, former Secretary-Treasurer of the FN Chapter for this information.

CHARLES McMILLAN, passed away on May 27, 2021, Charles served as former President of the FN Chapter, which was closed last year.

Thanks again to Richard Behrens for this brief information about Charles.

Florida "FX" Chapter

LELAND DALE RIGGINS, age 92, became a Silent Key on May 28, 2021. Dale was born on May 30, 1929. He was a longtime member of the Morse Telegraph Club.

Thanks to Jan, Dale's wife, for this brief notice.

HOUSE TRACK **Want Ad Section**

For Morse Telegraph Club Members

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

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

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

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

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

Hubert Jewell is now a Silent Key, but his interesting book is still available.

AVAILABLE: The equipment is part of a very large collection gathered over 60 years. It was from a family member who has passed but was a very long time and well known MTC member. I have included three pictures of the hardware. I would like to sell it as a collection. There are several rare west coast as well as many early rare pieces. \$12,500. Dave Ball (408) 805-0065



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Richard Williams
International Secretary-Treasurer

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(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

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