

Straight Key Night 2007

The reports of CW's demise are greatly exaggerated...

Dan Henderson, N1ND

A reporter telephoned me shortly after the FCC released its Report and Order (R&O) on Docket 05-235, which eliminated the Morse code as a testing requirement. He asked an interesting question: Now that the popularity of Morse code has diminished, how are hams going to be communicating?

I probably surprised the reporter with my reply. I told him politely that I would have to reject his basic premise as untrue. I told him that while Morse code proficiency would soon be gone as far as being a testing requirement for Amateur Radio licenses, I could assure him that CW is alive and well, happily populating the amateur bands.

One look at the growth of participation in the annual ARRL Straight Key Night (SKN) will show that not only is code still around, it remains as popular today as it ever was. Yes, many newer amateurs choose not to pursue that avenue in the hobby, but tens of thousands of amateurs across the US, and many more worldwide, still enjoy the rhythmic syncopation of brass being pounded. In fact, since 2000 and the dropping of the code speed requirement to 5 WPM, the number of participants in SKN has grown from 90 submissions to a new record total of 407 in January 2007. Those participants made a total of 3403 contacts, up from just 851 only seven years ago.

Many people will speculate on reasons for the increase. Some will say it is due to such groups as the Straight Key Century Club (SKCC — www.skccgroup.com/) and

FISTS, The International Morse Preservation Society (www.fists.org). To be sure, those organizations have played an important role to keep code thriving on the airwaves.

Some will offer that as more people become interested in restoring vintage equipment, using that equipment on CW during SKN is a natural “fit.” When you scroll through the almost 200 entries in the ARRL Online Soapbox (www.arrl.org/contests/soapbox), you will see not only photos of vintage hand keys and bugs, but also lots of “Heathkit green” and “Drake black” from participants proudly displaying their handiwork. So it’s hard to dispute the role that vintage gear plays in the popularity of this event.

But I think the most likely reason of all could well be that for whatever reason — nostalgia, the challenge of trying something new or curiosity — SKN continues to evolve into a plain and simple good time on the air. Old methods of communicating are “introduced” to a new generation of people and equipment.

Having done the SKN write-ups for the past nine years, it is amazing to see the comments from participants who view this special event as a “homecoming” — old friends making their special once-a-year schedule to recall the good times they have shared. After all, isn’t that at the core of why each of us loves this hobby? See you on the air January 1 for SKN 2008!

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2007 Participants

AA4LR, AA4ZS, AA5TB, AA6E, AA6W, AB0XE, AB1BW, AB3AP, AB8FJ, AC0BU, AD4E, AD5VC, AD6TM, AD6YU, AE3A, AE3J, AE4MZ, AE6C, AE6PX, AF2Z, AF4O, AF9J, AI4EV, AI4KH, AI4RE, AJ9ON, AL7JK, HP1AC, HP1DCP, HP1IBF, JE1JKY (W0FBI, op), K0AQO, K0CJD, K0LMD, K0LUW, K0LWV, K0PC, K0ZK, K1MBX, K1NV, K1PDD, K1Y/0 (NA0L, op), K1Y/4(KB4T,op), K1YA, K1YPP, K2GBH, K2HPV, K2KEY, K2NPN, K2RFP, K2TV, K2UY, K3MD, K3NCO, K3PX, K4CZ, K4EOR, K4HGX, K4JYS, K4NVJ, K4OSO, K4TC, K4TRH, K4VD, K4YRK, K55SOH, K5AVJ, K5BZH, K5EWW, K5HK, K5ICW, K5LXP, K5OPB, K5UBS, K6DBG, K6ESE, K6FFY, K6PBQ, K7AO, K7NTW, K7SQT, K7SU, K7TFW, K7ZQ, K7ZYV, K8BWB, K8DD, K8JD, K8KFJ, K8RDN, K8WIW, K9DGS, K9EW, K9PFA, K9PL, K9QH, K9UQN, K9WWT, K9YA, K9YKL, KA0IQT, KA0P, KA3LOC, KA4JQZ, KA5PNE, KA5WSS, KA7T, KA8GSA, KA8HFN, KB1LZH, KB1YJ, KB2KDV, KB2QIU, KB4LWT, KB4T, KB4WJA, KB7PSG, KB8SCI, KB8TXZ, KC0JBU, KC0RSX, KC2LWX, KC7PM, KC9ECI, KC9FAV, KC9HGW, KD0CA, KD1NZ, KD1Z, KD3JF, KD5JOM, KD5RSS,

KD5XB, KD6MPY, KD6WKY, KD7H, KD8BXT, KE0A/KP2, KE0G, KE4DP, KE5AQD, KE6OIO, KE6QR, KF4IH, KF4JG, KF6P, KF9VA, KG2OR, KG4IGC, KG4KGY, KG4LDD, KG4URF, KH6/W3GW, K14CIA, K14CKT, K14KGW, K14TI, K15JF, K17BS, KK5FX, KK7YJ, KL7IPV, KM1Z, KM5I, K04OP, K06IF, K06YG, K0BS, KP4DX, KQ5U, KS5V, KS6CW, KT3A, KW0R, LW3EX, N0BGT, N0EVH, N0JL, N0SS, N0UMP, N1AFV, N1AS, N1AW, N1FZ, N1HIY, N1MS, N1RX, N1SB, N1ZJ, N1ZS, N2BE, N2COP, N2CSO, N2EY, N2QZ, N2SLB, N2UC, N3CJM, N3GE, N3JJT, N3NZ, N3TEE, N4BBB, N4BM, N4CU, N4DKD, N4NM, N4NTO, N4RAY, N4RE, N5BIA, N5BO, N5DRB, N5DY, N5KEV, N5MZX, N5NT, N5PHT, N5WVR, N5YFC, N6KZ, N6NAX, N6WK, N7EF, N7RVD, N7VS, N8GU, N8MXM, N9BOR, N9N, N9PUZ, N9WAT, NE7X, NG2T, NG7Z, NI0I, NI5W, NJ3K, NJ7M, NM0L, NN0B, NN8B, NP2F, NP3CW, NQ4Q, NR8Z, NS6Y, NT4XT, NU7T, NV0U, NW8L, NY0O, NY6P, OH3WD, ON6ZJ, VA3RKM, VE1GA, VE3IFS, VE3IFS/W2, VE3WMB, VE7NI, VO1NA, VY0DU, W0CH, W0DM, W0EGJ, W0ESE, W0FCL, W0LM, W0NOV, W0QBF, W0RQO, W0SJS, W0TF, W0TUP, W0UFO, W0WM, W0YRN, W1AA, W1DUW,



The relaxing spirit of SKN is epitomized by Carl Young, K5HK, of Reno, Nevada.

DX Participation

Panama	3
Argentina	1
Belgium	1
Finland	1
Japan	1
Romania	1

Best Fist Nominees

KB4T	5
W4KD	3
K4VD	3
WA7CS	3
K1Y/4	3

Most Interesting QSO Nominees

K9VKY	6
K5KW	3
W8GD	3
K1Y/4	3

Entries by States and Provinces

AK	1	IL	18	ND	2	PA	16
AL	8	IN	7	NE	3	PR	1
AR	2	KS	5	NH	8	RI	2
AZ	9	KY	5	NJ	12	SC	2
BC	1	LA	2	NL	1	SD	2
CA	37	MA	11	NM	4	TN	10
CO	7	MD	6	NS	1	TX	25
CT	5	ME	3	NT	1	UT	1
DE	2	MI	12	NV	6	VA	7
FL	17	MN	13	NY	19	VT	4
GA	10	MO	14	OH	14	WA	16
HI	1	MS	3	OK	4	WI	6
IA	7	MT	2	ON	4	WV	3
ID	5	NC	8	OR	3	WY	1

W1DV, W1EJ, W1FWB, W1LIC, W1OH, W1PID, W1RO, W1TF, W1TPB, W1TS, W2GIW, W2IQK, W2JEK, W2LG, W2LID, W2LJ, W2OBJ, W2RS, W2TI, W2WSC, W2YWC, W3BBO, W3CUV, W3DP, W3EQ, W3MT, W3MWR, W3SAL, W3TZK, W4CAR, W4CU, W4DEC, W4NTI, W4OEQ, W4RK, W4STX, W4TVI, W4YD, W4YE, W5AKU, W5ETK, W5JBV, W5TB, W5XW, W6FW, W6FZA, W6JHQ, W6PRI, W6RWI, W6SGJ, W6TUR, W6VNR, W6XU, W7CCW, W7GVE, W7LNG, W7OD, W7POE, W7UYJ, W7YS, W7ZMD, W8AWE, W8FDV, W8GD, W8HYD, W8JFB, W8SME, W8WTS, W9ADG, W9CBT, W9KMP, W9KTB, W9RSX, WA0VQY, WA1ABI, WA1CFX, WA1UMA, WA1VQY, WA2BSW, WA2EWE/4, WA2PHM, WA2QQF, WA2VQV, WA3JPG, WA4CSH, WA4GLH, WA4QNV, WA5HDL, WA5OLT, WA6ARA, WA6BOB, WA6BXV, WA6OCP, WA7CS, WA7DUY1, WA7GSN, WA7ND, WA8OKR, WA8TOX, WA9PYH, WA9QNN, WA9WJB, WA9ZBW, WA9ZJI, WAFOA, WB0B, WB0CJB, WB0CNK, WB0IXV, WB0TUA, WB1EDI, WB2RCB, WB3CQD, WB6IYM, WB7O, WB8RVK, WB8SJE, WB8YYY, WB9DKL, WB9DLC, WB9HFH, WD5ABC, WK0X, WK4U, WNN9, WU7R, YO3BWB