

2018 Straight Key Night Results

More than 150 participants fired up their straight keys for ARRL's classic New Year's Day event.

Bart Jahnke, W9JJ,
bjahnke@arrl.org
ARRL Contest Branch Manager

During the 2018 Straight Key Night (SKN), more than 150 participants made over 1,000 contacts worldwide, all sending Morse code manually (using code keys or bugs). On January 1, 2018, operators were supplied with a huge Blue Moon.

Soapbox Comments

Here are just a few of the highlights from SKN participants:

Michael Smith, AD0YM, said, "This year's SKN was my first successful contact in over 40 years...The straight key I was using during the SKN was my Novice key from 1966/67."

Joseph Craig, VO1NA, used the CH150 transceiver from the Marconi Radio Club of Newfoundland, VO1MRC, for SKN. He reported that conditions were not the best, but that the fists and contacts were fantastic.

Theodore Smith, W1TPB, wrote, "I always look forward to SKN. The speed is slower and when conditions permit, the contacts are lengthy. I still find the old antique key is the best of them all. The bands were in fairly good shape and I was pleased to make it into my 85th year."

Barry Fluxe, W4LSV, said, "I used my original Novice transmitter from 1965, a Johnson Adventurer. I was rock-bound on 40 meters. It sure was a nostalgia night using my old J-38."

Robert Sauvan, Jr., W0YBS, noted that he worked a lot of stations using his old equipment — a Johnson Viking Valiant and Hammarlund HQ-170A. During the event, he switched between a number of bugs to keep things interesting.

Mark Wilson, K1RO, fired up his newly reconditioned Novice station (a Heathkit HW-16 with HG-10 VFO). Mark says to those he worked, "Thanks for copying my rusty straight key sending!"

Hank Preciado, HP1IBF, wrote in from Panama to report that this SKN event was his 15th consecutive year of participation. This year, he challenged himself with three straight keys — a J-45, a Junker (a German key that's "a mix between an old Mercedes-Benz and a Panzer tank"), and a plastic Heathkit straight key, which he fondly calls "El Cheapo." It was a real task to choose a favorite, but the winner was El Cheapo.

Best Fist and Most Interesting QSO

Each year, SKN participants are asked to vote on who had the Best Fist and who gave them their Most Interesting QSO. This year, the title of Best Fist goes to Thomas Warren, K3TW, and Most Interesting QSO goes to George Gross, N3GJ.

You don't have to wait a year to enjoy hand-sent CW. Get on the air and enjoy what your straight key has to offer! ARRL will hold the next Straight Key Night on January 1, 2019.



Courtney Duncan, N5BF, with his straight key and accoutrements making two moonbounce (EME) contacts at 1296 MHz, with NC11 and VE6TA. [Courtney Duncan, N5BF, photo]

Participating Stations

AA0QZ, AA4AI, AA4TB, AA4ZS, AA7FV, AA7IR, AA8UU, AB7MP, AB8FJ, AC9EZ, AD0KH, AE3A, AE7CG, AF4MY, AF5Q, AF7DK, K0DTJ, K0IP, K1EEE, K1RO, K2HT, K2NPN, K2RP, K3BVQ, K3JT, K3MD, K3SWZ, K3TW, K3ZL, K4HGX, K4RT, K4XG, K5BZH, K5LDA, K5MBA, K5SOH, K5TEN, K5VZD, K6CTW, K6KQV, K6PBQ, K6TY (WB6VRN, op), K7ZYV, K8JRE, K8JV, K8OD, K9PFA, K9VKY, K9YA, KA4VVA, KA4WJB, KA5HRF, KA7T, KA8NNY, KB6A, KC0GXX, KC2KWA, KC2LWX, KD2BD, KD5QHV, KD7REM, KD8BB, KE0TT, KF4MKP, KF8KS, KG4KGY, KG4UPO, KI0G, KJ6MBW, KK5FX, KL7HNY/4, KN5L, KO8S, KW6G, N2BE, N3HCN, N4BAA, N4TOL, N5BF, N5XGG, N9BOR, N9NM, NC4RT, NI0R, NJ3K, NJ6A, NM0L, NN4OO, NN7A, NO0V, NQ4Q, NW0M, NW6V, VE3AIH/W4, VE3CBK, VE7NI, VO1NA, VY1KX, W0AAA, W0CC, W0CZ, W0ESE, W0HXL, W0YBS, W1DUW, W1PDI, W1PID, W1RO, W1TPB, W1TS, W1UJ, W1VR, W2GIW, W2LID, W3SMK, W3TTT, W4LSV, W5AKU, W5NZ, W5QLF, W6JHQ, W7AIT, W8DXU, W8FDV, W8IM, W8IX, W9ABD (W4RK, op), WA0CFQ, WA1ABI, WA2CHV, WA2SON, WA2T, WA2TBQ, WA2WMR, WA5FRF, WA6BXV, WA7XX, WA9PWP, WA9STI, WA9ZBW, WA9ZJI, WB0B, WB0CJB, WB0IXI, WB3JKQ, WB6SCA, WB8CFO, WB8DQT, WB9DLC, WB9HFK, WD0K, WD5ABC, and WD8RIF. DX stations included G3PLE, HP1AC, HP1IBF, SA5ODJ, SV1DKD, and HP1RIS.