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Phil Sager, WB4FDT, Executive Secretary
7634 Carla Rd
Pikesville, MD 21208

Former OOTC President W6HV receiving his plaque



OLD OLD TIMERS CLUB

NEW domestic member \$26. (\$10 initiation + \$16 yearly sustaining fee).

NEW International member, \$28 (\$20 initiation + \$18 yearly sustaining fee).

Note that the Initiation fee is a one-time fee to new members. These fees include receiving the Spark-Gap Times via email or via the OOTC website.

Renewing USA members \$16 yearly, \$18 Canadian and foreign. These fees include receiving the Spark-Gap Times via email or via the OOTC website.

If you wish to receive the PRINT Spark Gap Times the additional fee is \$6.00 yearly for USA members, including Life Members, and \$7 yearly for Canadian and foreign members, including Life Members.

Life Membership dues: Under age 70-\$250.00. Ages 70-89 \$150.00. 90 and above—Free. Note that Life Membership dues do not include the print Spark-Gap Times. The \$6 yearly fee must still be paid for the print copy.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT. You are eligible if you had two-way wireless communication 40 (or more) years ago (eligible on Jan 1 of the 40th year) OOTC recognizes your first two-way communication by Amateur, commercial, CB or military operation. Provide proof if possible. If never ham licensed but had eligible 2-way communication, you may also join.

OOTC wishes to have extended information about each member, activities and background. This information becomes a permanent and important part of your record as a member of OOTC, making it possible for us to publish your life work and experiences. Information is saved in OOTC archives. We would a photograph. Send a biography and/or story suitable for publication in the Spark-Gap times on separate sheets of paper, or via email attachment to our Secretary

The OOTC, which started in 1947. is solely interested in the history of radio, particularly Amateur Radio, and anyone has had experience with two way wireless communication 40 or more years ago is welcome to join and contribute their communication stories to the organization. We have had more than 4600 members over the past 70 years.

OOTC PRESIDENT: Skip Amis, N5CFM #4598

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Skip Amis, N5CFM our new OOTC President

Thots from da “Prez

Blessings to y’all from my desk. I wish to thank the Board of Directors [BOD], especially Phil Sager, WB4FDT, and Fritz Tendez, WD8E, for their constant support and encouragement. All of which lead to my acceptance, nomination, and election as your OOTC President, effective as of 1 July, 2018. And for this, I am so very grateful to y’all. Please realize, I had never planned on anything ever happening like this in my life! For this is truly an honor to serve you and I’ll do my “best-est!” Thank you so very much for your trust and support. BTW, if you are curious about my ham history, go to QRZ.COM.

So where do we go from here and what are we going to do? First of all, I’m not the one to grab the flag, lead the charge with all the OOTC men up Culp’s Hill. [Culp’s hill is a landform 3/4 mi. south of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, where the battle occurred on July 3, 1863.] I am just a guy with some ideas to bounce off y’all. So, we’ll to see what happens and where we will go from here.

I have thought about having a monthly ‘Git-together’ Net on Sunday morning, preferably before y’all have to get up and head off to church around 0700 hrs. CST. We could do either CW or SSB on 40 or 75 meters. Maybe the best would be SSB, for many like me, were great at one time; or many just don’t do CW; and some like Phil, myself, etc. can copy CW - but God help us when it comes to sending. Many have really bad neuropathy [tremors in your hands], and it would 30 minutes for just one of us to check in.

Maybe we could call it the ‘SGT OOTC QSO’ or the ‘OOTC Git-Together’ QSO party. So, what are your thoughts or ideas? Feel free to call or contact any of the BOD members, or me @ (405) 359-0704; email @ n5cfm@live.com.

And lastly, several of you may be interested in stamp collecting. Henceforth, I have a friend who made up a valid postage stamp for the Quarter Century Wireless Assn, QCWA, with the logo on it. I've been trying to get in touch with him, and have not been successful. For he travels a lot. Again, if you are interested, I'll see what I can do – and the cost will only be the standard postage rate.

So, in closing, I'm rather excited about what's in store for us in the future. And with all of us helping out – we just might get to the top of the hill, together.

God bless all;

Skip, N5CFM, 'Da Prez'



OOTC NEEDS A TREASURER!

OOTC found a President, now we need to find a Treasurer. Our treasurer Joe Wehner, W8KNO, is ready to retire from this important position after nearly 20 years, so we need a volunteer. The job is not difficult, but does involve keeping track of the checking account and depositing checks, For further information, email or write to Joe at his address on the front page

THE LAST WORDS OF A HERO WHO SAVED 208 LIVES.

From "Dots and Dashes" the Official publication of the Morse Telegraph Club, Inc Winter, 2017-2018 issue, from an article appearing in the Ottawa Citizen, written by Kelly Egan.

Submitted Doug Rowlands

One summer day in 2014 a Toronto resident, new to the area, was driving along a concession road outside Almonte (west of Ottawa, Ontario) and noticed a weather-beaten and rotting plywood sign on the edge of a cornfield. It marked the birthplace of George Eccles, who died in 1909 while trying to save the passengers of the SS Ohio, a 340-foot steamer that had struck a rock off the coast of British Columbia in the dead of an August night.

Eccles had used wireless telegraphy to alert two nearby ships of the emergency, provided the location and stuck to his duties until more than 200 passengers were safely disembarked. Heightening the drama were his final, desperate transmissions:

“Passengers all off and adrift in small boats. Captain and crew going off in last boat, waiting for me now. Goodbye. My God, I'm ...” It seems he lost his life when he went to search of a shipmate below decks. In 1909 wireless transmission was so new a technology that he is described as the first wireless operator to die in a shipping accident—three years before the Titanic. He is recognized on a plaque in Manhattan's Battery Park at a monument erected to “fallen wireless boys.”

Our driver who noticed the sign wondered how it was that the sign - commemorating a local hero- had been allowed to deteriorate. Making inquiries, he also learned that Eccles was buried in Almonte's St. Paul's Anglican Church cemetery without a stone or marker! As a result of the drivers resolve, a group of politicians and local heritage activists gathered at the old Eccles farm to unveil a brand new sign, colored and laminated—and meant to last!

George Eccles was born in 1873 and learned telegraphy at the Almonte CPR station. He then went on to work in the rail yards in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where, in 1905 he was held responsible for a communications error which resulted in a head on train collision with at least one fatality, and was dismissed. The ensuing investigation revealed that, at the time, he had been working his telegraph position for some 36 hours straight! He then moved on to Seattle, Washington, where he secured employment with the firm that operated the SS Ohio. As a cruel final irony, Eccles had given notice of his resignation just before departure, and it was to have been his last sailing...

A second telegrapher hero: 1889 Johnstown Flood

Hettie Ogle was the office manager of the Western Union in Johnstown and her daughter Minnie was her assistant. On the day of the flood, they remained in the station, keeping in touch with Pittsburgh and other towns throughout the valley. Prior to the dam break, Hettie stayed at the key giving reports damage and flooding. She sent the men operators home so they could be with their families. Her last message said; “the South Fork operators says the dam is about to go. This is my last message”.

The WU building was completely destroyed and their bodies were never identified. In the wreckage of the building there were only two recognizable objects; Mrs Ogle's wedding ring, identified by her son, and a telegraph key.

OOTC SILENT KEYS

#2204 W5IIA, Joe Lodato, 95, Slidell, LA. Licensed in 1939 as W5IIA, and was a radio operator for the US Maritime Service during WWII. Received EE degree at Louisiana State University, Retired in 1977. Joined OOTC in 1979 and may have been our longest member.

#3668 KK5NU John Moore III, 81, Dallas TX, Licensed 1954 as KN5BXM

#3679 W0NYG William T Thompson, 79, Midland, MI.. 1943 first 2-way radio contact. Licensed as W0NYG in South Dakota in 1961. Ex-W5JSM. USAF vet.

#3752 W5HQJ, Richard Shapee, 91, Concord, CA. Licensed in 1962 as W5HQJ. Life Member OOTC. Retired from the Northrop Corporation where he invented certain types of seismic detectors and airborne navigational equipment. He served several terms as a Councilman of the city of Garland, TX. He was an avid writer and wrote several books of poetry.

#4322 N5DRV John Duke, 90, Dallas TX, 1942 first 2-way radio contact, licensed as W5ZKT in 1952. Life Member OOTC. During WWII He was a radio operator guiding US bombers to their targets. He passed away in 2012.

#4638 WA4SDE, Danny Shrader, 77, Woodford, VA. Danny joined the OOTC at a hamfest, and didn't give your secretary much information about himself. I had known Danny for over 50 years. He was first licensed about 1962. He had been active on the Virginia Phone Net, and recent years he was active on the 3938 group. He was well known at the local hamfests selling used amateur radio equipment. I was at his home several years ago and found he had a room full of at least a hundred working amateur transceivers, transmitters and receivers from years gone by, including a lovely working Collins receiver and transmitter.. Rest well, Danny...

NEW MEMBERS

Well, as some of you noticed, the new membership numbers in the last 2017 issue were incorrect. Here is the current correct list of new membership numbers:

#4682 Frasier KK1A	4683 Ujczik WD9HBC	4684 Steffan WB3EFA
#4685 Fagan K7DF	4686 Spiegel KD2ZZ	4687 Simila W3TOS
#4688 Rhodes W8DN	4689 Dutson NM5G	4690 Trotter AA4ZZ

#4691 Carlisle K8TUR 4692 Maylott W2YE
#4694 Hipsley W2RU 4695 Lerghman K8PJ

4693 Simmons NI0K
4696 Kubnisha W4NLT

#4697 James Kennedy, K2PHD, Ledgewood, NJ. Author, professor and consultant involved with all kinds of communication and cyber security. Active QRPer. Licensed in 1959.

#4698 not used

#4699 William Pomeroy WA2LEY, Lafayette, NY. First licensed in 1960 as WV2LEY. Also held WB6KLS while living in California

#4700 Robert Hecht, N3AAK, Levittown, PA 19057. Worked CW intercept communications in Vietnam. Licensed in 1984 as KA3ZKJ.

#4701 Robert Trierweiler, WN7RQP, Maiden, NC. Licensed in 1971.

#4702 Reserved

#4703 Paul Sims AI4EE, Garner, NC, licensed in 1977, Electrical Engineer 32 years.

#4704 Robert Montgomery, W3ZR, Eagles Mere, PA. Licensed as KA3MUV in 1974.

#4705 Timothy Brown, W1MKA, Mattapoisett, MA. Licensed in 1962 as WN2MKA, later WB2MKA. Army Signal Service from 1971-76.

#4706 Jay Smith W4OFR, Stuart, FL. First licensed in 1978 as WD4OFR. Army CW intercept operator 1953-55.

I note that member #4694, "Bud" Hipsley W2RU, is a current candidate for ARRL Director of the Roanoke Division. I encourage OOTC members of the Roanoke Division, (VA-NC-SC-WVA) to vote for Bud and vote for transparency!

OOTC FINANCES, 2017

Treasurer W8KNO has provided us with the 2017 cash flow statement. The statement, which takes up several pages, has been simplified.

Opening Balance January 1, 2017 \$22,184.30

Income for 2017, includes sustaining membership dues, life memberships, dues of

new members, donations and bank interest \$4705.10.

SGT printing, postage, office supplies, data base maintainance, Secretarial maintainance, Dayton hamfest table, advertising. \$5015.60.

Ending balance, December 31, 2017: \$21,874.30 This represents a loss of \$310.50 for 2017.

A Brief History of the US Navy and early Wireless

The United States Navy was among the pioneers of wireless. In 1888 a Lt. Bradley Fisk wound a number of turns of insulated cable around the USS Neward lying at the New York Navy yard and likewise around a yard tug. He could receive signals a short distance away with a telephone receiver. The system, however, was called induction wireless and Fisk couldn't claim the invention of wireless.

By 1898 Marconi had founded the American Marconi Company in Wellfleet, Massachusetts. A year later the Navy gave Marconi permission to install wireless sets on three Navy vessels. Two of them were the USS Connecticut and the USS Virginia. The first official Naval message actually took place on September 30, 1899, when Marconi sent the following message:

VIA WIRELESS TELEGRAPH

To: Bureau of Equipment, Washington, DC

From: USS Connecticut

“Under way in Naval parade via NAVESINK station. Mr. Marconi succeeded in opening wireless telegraphic communication with shore at 1234 PM. The experiments were a complete success”

SIGNED Blish, Lt. USN

The message was received at the Highland Station on the New Jersey coast. The following year, three US Naval officers were sent to Europe to examine all of the various wireless equipment. German equipment was chosen by the Officers and by 1901 all major ships in the US fleet had been equipped with German-made wireless.

Within a few years the Navy was buying equipment from France, England and the United States. In 1903 the New York Navy Yard had a wireless school established with 13 students, and by 1904 the Navy had 18 shore stations and thirty-three ships equipped with wireless. Teddy Roosevelt's “Great White Fleet” in 1907 went around the world and 20 of its ships had wireless equipment, mostly DeForest. By 1908 the

communication distance was 2900 miles, in a contact between the USS Connecticut near New Zealand and the Naval wireless Station at Point Loma, California.

In less than 10 years, Naval wireless communication on ships had gone from virtually nothing to reliable communications over several thousand miles! Reminds me of the first computers bought at Radio Shack in 1985 compared to computers 10 years later!!

NEW OOTC PRESIDENT—Gilbert “Skip” Amis, Jr-- N5CFM

I’m a retired Social Psychologist and Theologian, having devoted over 30 years to those “beloved hallowed halls of academia.” I’m currently a Member of I.O.O.F, Edmond Lodge #12; P.N.G.; Lexington Masonic Lodge #72; OES #67; Guthrie Scottish Rite Consistory; York Rite Chapter, Council, and Commandery in Shawnee; and York Rite College #75. I'm so very blessed to be married to Annette, N5ANI, whom I affectionately call Annie. Many of you may know her from RF Parts, Inc., in San Marcos, CA. She was International Sales and Marketing Manager, Commercial Tubes Division, for several years. If you ever attended any of the major trade shows or conventions in Dayton, Las Vegas, etc., you may have met my Annie! Anyway, regardless of my credentials, she still makes me get my own coffee... What a deal!

My interest in amateur radio began in 1955. My Dad, a Major in the Army, was stationed in occupied Europe and often there was not a lot for me to do. The television reception was lousy, we were living in a French hotel awaiting placement in base housing, as a result I was bored stiff most of the time. One day, Dad brought home a Zenith TransOceanic to keep me occupied and get me out of his and my Mother’s hair. I was in hog heaven; for seemingly to me, the entire world was at my fingertips. There was Radio Free Europe (RFE), the Armed Forces Network (AFN), the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and when the band opened up I could receive American broadcast stations. Then, there were those weird “beep-beep” sounds coming from certain segments of the dial, which after some inquiry the wonderful world of Morse Code entered into my life. As an eight year old stranded in a French hotel, how was I to learn what those strange sounds meant? On the Army base there were radio operators who were more than willing to help, also we had a scout chapter which offered a ham radio merit badge. So I began to learn a little bit about Morse Code which remained with me throughout my life. In 1959, we were transferred stateside and my radio interests were replaced with many other activities – hot rods, motorcycles, and girls!

Around 1971, I purchased a used Realistic 3 channel CB and antenna. I hooked it up in my bedroom, and WOW, modern technology had come into my life! I was on the air! But to my chagrin, I did not receive the warm and hearty welcome that I had hoped for nor; from which I had expected stemming from what the radio

and ham operators in Europe years ago had told me about. I was promptly told to get my"....(and then some)" off the air. I was to stay off the air until I had obtained a license, and in no uncertain terms was I to return until I did!" I apologized for offending everyone from God, the Pope, and anyone else I could think of. However being inquisitive by nature, I finally asked how I was to obtain "this license." I suppose the way I handled things, it caused the operators to find some humor in my queries; they gave in and offered to help me with the needed information. Soon I was granted the call sign of KFK 0180. I eventually became quite involved with the wonderful, wacky world of Citizens Band Radio; eventually I was given a "handle," Double Eagle, (also which is my given Native Cherokee name.) After several years I became bored, frustrated, and felt there was something really lacking in radio. I think in actuality, I had finally run of things to do. For you are so (legally) limited to what you expect out of the CB realm; then in 1979, Buddy Luce, WD5FRB, came into my life.

Buddy owned a used car lot in Alvin, Texas, loved Collins radios, building Heathkit gear, and he even had his ham shack in his car lot office. I was working at a commercial two way shop there in Alvin, TX., and had gone into his office to buy a car. It wasn't long before we became great friends and he had brought up the topic of Ham Radio and CW. I had been listening to some code tapes at home and he queried if I could copy any. There was a TV set in his office I was watching it at the time, so Buddy took out his Heathkit keyer and began to send a short QSO. When he finished, he wonder why I hadn't write anything down. I told him what he had sent, and then wrote it down for him. To my amazement, I had just passed the Element 1 of the Novice CW requirement. He sent off for my Novice test and on December 19, 1979, I was granted a station license, KA5HDM; and after that Buddy liked to call me, the "*Hot Dog Man*." A few months later I upgraded to General and received my current call sign; N5CFM. Buddy then named me, the "*Chicken Fried Mouse*" which is still around today. I hope to keep it a little bit longer, for I have never thought much about changing it, that is unless aa really good 1X2 comes along..

I am currently custodian over NV5V, The CW Memorial Club. The call sign NV5V was assigned to Tom Shultz, one of my best friends, for I was his Elmer; he passed away due to cancer. He came out of the 11 meter band after coming over to my house over 30 years ago. Tom saw my station set up in my front room. There was a Kenwood TS-520 with a Commodore Vic 20 hooked up to it. I was working CW at the time on a Vibroplex bug and it caught Tom's eye and ear. Tom took to CW like a duck does to water. He began studying, obtained his license, and within a year could head copy over 40 wpm. He loved to work packet and CW DX. After he passed away, I found out that his call sign had not been turned in to be cancelled. His widow graciously allowed for me to have it for our club station call sign. Tom will always be remembered by many of his close friends, especially me.

In closing, my main interests are Low Band A1 (CW) and A3J (SSB), with my

goals are to accomplish both 5BWAS CW/SSB; and maybe 5BWAS Angel Music (AM). I enjoy QRP construction, key restoration, vintage WWII rigs, and I believe REAL RADIOS GLOW IN THE DARK! Currently, I'm QCWA Central Oklahoma Chapter 63 "Prez" and Net Manager over the W5AS, K5DLE, and W5HXL Nets. In the past, I've served as chapter Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The W5AS Net meets on 3845 KHz every Sunday morning at 0730 hrs. The K5DLE Net meets on 147.107 MHz every Tuesday at 1900 hrs, and the W5HXL Net meets on 147.107 MHz every Thursday at 1900 hrs. If you're on the air, or in the area, feel free to drop by and check in! You're always more than Welcome! So until then, I wish you a - VY 47/73!

"If you can read this, thank a teacher;
since it is in English, thank a soldier!"
blessings - Skip Amis, N5CFM, PhD, DMin, DDiv, Mdiv.

Proudly serving those who serve since 1973.
QCWA Life Member #32341 ARRL Life Member
VE for the ARRL & W5YI #2357: Ham/Commercial.
GERATOL #2301, FISTS #12627, NAQCC #0745, OOTC #4598,
10-10 #73840, SKCC #6119, FLYING PIGS #FP-1179
U.S.Navy, 1965-'66; U.S.Merchant Marines, 1973-'79

DILBERT

By Scott Adams



WE MISS THE DAYTON HAMFEST

Your editor was all set to go—we had a table reserved—but a day before the Hamfest I ran into some family problems and it became impossible for me to attend. I did have a lot of comments about where we were this year which shows how important it is to show up at Dayton. We will be there next year.

LAVINA SHAW—A living legend among Telegraphers

Lavina Shaw is the only woman and Canadian since 1943 to hold the office of International President of the Morse Telegraph club. At the club's peak in the 1960's and 70's the club had close to 4000 members in Canada and the United States with 37 active chapters. Total membership is less than 1000.

She was born in a railway station. “I could hear this click-clacking all the time and I was a bit curious, so I asked my dad, the station agent, to teach me the code. I learned the Morse Code from about the age of 10. In my late teens I went to work for the Canadian National Telegraphs”. “I worked on the commercial end as I used to copy a lot of news from the Vancouver Sun, and from Reuters and the Canadian Press.”

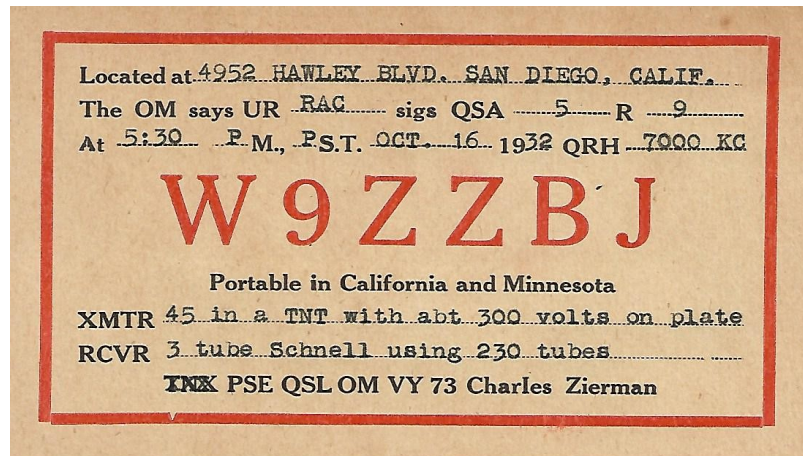
Shaw said she earned good pay. “Very good for a woman. I was getting about three times as much as a secretary. I was paid equal to a man. You had to be absolutely accurate and very confidential, you didn't dare say anything”.

Shaw says that one of the highlights of her Presidency was she telegraphed with the last living Canadian veteran of World One, John Babcock. “He was a former telegrapher and he could still telegraph at age 107”. (Babcock died in 2010 at the age of 109).

GARFIELD

JIM DAVIS





MORE HISTORY OF AMATEUR CALL SIGNS

I thought I knew everything about the history of amateur call signs—but W4WJ, Don Murray, of Fredericksburg, Texas, came up with some new information about the history of call signs that no one seems to know anything about.

It has been a tradition in the Amateur Radio service that an amateur radio license was really two licenses, a primary station license, and a operator license (see 97.3 of FCC regs). If the amateur had more than one station, he received additional call signs for each secondary (sometimes called “portable”) station. Back in the 1920's having more than one station was unusual, and the Department of Commerce issued secondary station call signs from among the entire regular call sign block.

However, beginning about 1927 the Commerce Department started to issue special “ZZ” 1 by 4 call signs, such as **W9ZZBJ** for portable calls. In the Radio Amateur Callbook, the “ZZ” block was usually denoted as a footnote. In 1932 was the first year that the “ZZ” block was denoted as a portable station in the listing and not as a footnote. Some of the portable licenses were secondary stations, with the “home” station listed. Some portables appear to be the only license for that individual.

W4WJ has send me the W9ZZBJ QSL card from 1933. In 1934 the Federal Communications Commission took over amateur licensing, and there was no longer a “ZZ” 1 x 4 call sign block.

