



Squelch Tales



Newsletter from the Merrymeeting Amateur Radio Association for December 2010

Seasons Greetings

Zen and the Art of Radiotelegraphy

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

One thing that I find amusing about Morse Code is that the more people claim that it's dead, the more people there are that rise up to defend and promote it. Note that I said "defend and promote it," not actually use it, but that topic is for another column.

Having said that let me direct you to a new tome on our ancient art, Zen and the Art of Radiotelegraphy by Carlo Consoli, IK0YGI. his book is available as a free download in the original Italian at:

http://www.qsl.net/ik0ygi/enu/ZART_ita_v20100826.pdf

Or in an English at:

http://www.qsl.net/ik0ygi/enu/ZART_r20101008m.pdf

What makes this book different from others is that instead of concentrating on the mechanics of learning and using Morse Code, the author spends a good deal of time talking about the psychology of learning this skill. To succeed in learning Morse Code, Consoli advises that we need to change our approach to learning: **INDENT THE NEXT TWO PARAGRAPHS IF POSSIBLE. THEY ARE A QUOTE FROM THE BOOK.....**Dan "When learning CW, therefore, we must establish a new component in our self-image and, when doing so, we need to be relaxed. always practice during the same time of day and in a place where you can experience positive feelings of comfort and pleasure. When we make a mistake we are always ready to blame ourselves. This is the way we learnt from our environment during childhood, often accepting any fault as our own error or weakness.

This potentially destructive mechanism can be used to build a positive self-image, rather than demolish it. A mistake must be considered a signal, pointing us in the right direction. If you fail let your mistake pass away, with no blame or irritation. Learn CW in a relaxed mood, enjoy the pleasure of learning something new, repeat your exercises every day and be confident in the self-programming abilities of your self-image. Just a few minutes a day: you can take care of your 'more serious' stuff later on."

Consoli also has some interesting things to say about getting faster. He agrees with me that it's essential to abandon pencil and paper and start copying in one's head. We also agree that at this point, you need to start using a paddle instead of straight key.

He has analyzed the situation a lot more than I have, though. When hams ask me how I learned to copy in my head, all I can do is to relate my own experience, which is that one day, I just went cold turkey. I put down the pencil and paper and never copied letter-by-letter ever again.

Unfortunately, that doesn't seem to work for a lot of operators. If that doesn't work for you, Consoli says that what you need to do is to program yourself to copy in your head. You do this, he says, by relaxing and visualizing. Visualize yourself as a high-speed operator, and one-day, you will be one.

That seems to have worked for him. He is a member of the Very High Speed Club (VHSC), First Class Operator's Club (FOC), and has been clocked at copying over 70 WPM.

Will it work for you? I'm not sure, but if you haven't been successful with other methods to

improve your code speed, then Consoli's methods are certainly worth a try.

When not pondering the psychology of operating CW, Dan actually operates CW. You'll find him almost every day on either 40m, 30m, and as we transition to winter here in North America, 80m. You can e-mail him with comments or questions at cwgeek@kb6nu.com.



REMOTE STATION OPERATION, Easily Done

At the Fall meeting of the Maine Chapter QCWA held in Auburn, John Huffman, K1ESE of Waterford, Maine delivered a very informative presentation on "remote Station Operation." John informed the attendees how easy and inexpensively it could be done to the attendees. Here is his presentation highlight outline:



Remote HF Operation de K1ESE

What Is Remote?

Remote operation is operating your radio at home while you are physically removed from the radio – by feet or by many miles. You can think of it as a very long cables from your radio at home to your mike, headphone, and CW key. These cables go from your radio to your home computer to the Internet to your remote computer

mike, headphone, and keyboard.

Remote operation is real radio to radio communications and, thus, contacts qualify for DXCC.

Why Remote?

- Use your home station while away from home anywhere you have Internet access. As in, in Florida for the winter or visiting relatives.

- Use your radio in the basement while sitting in the living room or out on the deck.
- Use a station set up somewhere else because you can not set up where you live – antenna restrictions, assisted living, long hospital stays, rental, limited space.

You can operate your station remotely anywhere you have access to the Internet at both ends.

At home – high-speed connection over your home network.

Away – high-speed, WiFi is readily available through home networks, libraries, motels, restraints, Internet cafés.

Definitions

Server – your radio and the computer connected to it at home.

Client – The computer in front of you. This can be a desktop, laptop, notebook or notepad. I use a notebook since it's so small. Even a smart phone can be used. For SSB audio the client computer needs a headset with microphone. For CW just headphones or a computer's speaker will do.

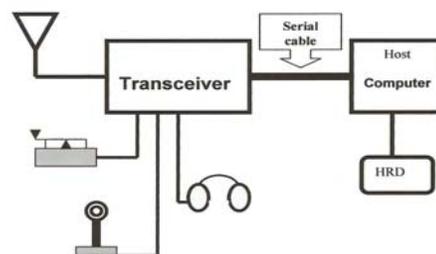
How to remote?

Cheap and easy –

Step-1 = Set up the radio for computer control using one of these radio control programs

- Ham Radio Delux (free)
- K4PY Rig Control
- TRX Manager

Install rig control software and connect your radio to your computer. Control the radio from the software and get a feel of how the program and the radio work together.



Step-2 = Control your server computer (at the radio) from your client computer (with you) over the Internet using one of these remote desktop programs:

- LogMeIn (free)
- Windows XP Pro Remote Desktop
- Teamviewer(free)

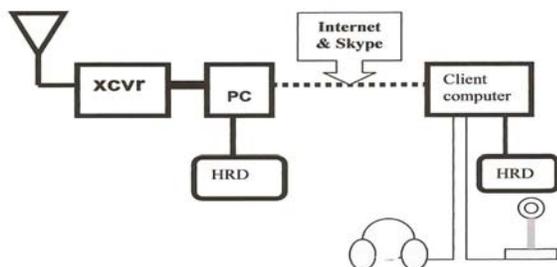
Put software on both the server and remote computer.

Step-3 = Send audio back and forth using Skype computer program (free). Put software on both the server and remote computer. For sound at the server, you will connect your computer microphone input to the radio headphone jack and connect the computer headphone output to the radio microphone jack.

For sound at the client you will connect a headset to the client computer.

Skype on the client computer will call Skype on the server computer. The server is set to auto-answer.

The audio is sent by Skype over the Internet and can be heard on the headphone jack of the client computer sound card.



CW -

To operate CW, use the CW keyboard built into some rig control programs (such as N4PY) to send CW on the home radio. The free program CWType will also do keyboard CW, but you need to build a simple interface.

Try it!!

Turn on your radio and computer at home. The radio is connected to the antenna and to the computer (both by serial port and by audio cable). Have the remote desktop server software operating in the background.

Once at the remote site, connect to the Internet. Run the server desktop client software to connect to the home desktop. Once the connection is made, you are operating your home computer from the remote keyboard.

From the remote computer call the home computer on Skype. Answer the call on the home computer using the remote desktop program. You will now hear your radio.

Using remote desktop open your rig control program on the home computer. You can now change frequency, adjust volume, change mode and control any other function of the home radio from the remote keyboard.

To operate SSB, use the radio control program to control the push to talk (PTT) or VOX. Use the Skype headset on your remote computer to send audio to the home radio and out over the air. To operate CW, type on your client keyboard.

If you find you enjoy this type of operating, you may want to advance to a better setup.

Improvements –

- Reliability – the ability to overcome unanticipated equipment glitches.
- Safety – the ability to protect equipment at the server site.
- Latency – the ability to minimize transmit and receive delays over the Internet for contesting and DXing.
- Performance – the ability to control multiple antennas and amplifiers.

Software

- Port forwarding
- Better rig control software
- Better remote desktop – VNC program
- Better CW – K1EL Winkey at each end
- Better audio – Mumble

Hardware -

- Remote power switch to robot computer and restart radio
- Remote antenna disconnect
- Radio to Ethernet devices to eliminate the server computer
 1. Glentek – www.glentekcorp.com/
 2. Remote Rig – www.remoterig.com/
- Web Cam – See what's happening in the shack, read the meters

Resources –

- Remote Operating for Amateur Radio, by Steve Ford WB8INY (ARRL book)

Rig Control –

- www.ham-radio-delux.com
- www.n4py.com

- www.trx-manager.com

Remote Audio –

- www.skype.com

Remote Desktop -

- www.teamviewer.com

Other –

- Web Power switch at :
www.digital-loggers.com/lpc.html
- K1EL Winkey
www.K1el.tripod.com/WKremote.html



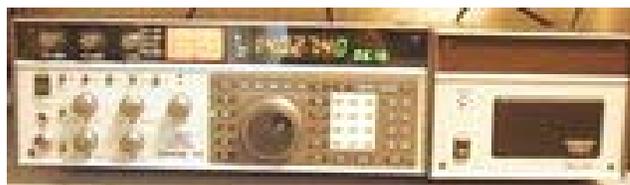
MARA's Holidays Dinner December 4th

Come join us for dinner on December 4th at 6:00pm for the annual yearend and Holiday Season dinner at the Kennebec Tavern at 119 Commercial Street in Bath. The arrangements are the same as last year. We will gather in the dining room and order from the menu. Bring the XYL, significant other or a friend(s). This gathering will take the place of a December meeting. We hope to see you there!



For Sale

TenTec Omni-6 (Option III)



This transceiver has been returned from the factory after receiving the option-3 upgrade. It is in excellent physical and operating condition and operated in a non-smoking environment. It comes with filters, manual & power cord for 12 VDC input. It can be mailed directly to your door or picked up at the QTH of K2LOT.

Asking \$1050.

If interested contact John Peters, K2LOT at: 207-882-7439



Field Day 2010, another great day for MARA

2010 Field Day Scores have been published by the ARRL for Field Day 2010.

- KS1R (MARA) had New England High Score for class 2F, and Maine in 2F
- We were 5th out of 18 for all Maine entries.
- We were 15th out of 66 for all 2F entries nationwide.

Congratulations goes out to all of you that participated in this years Field Day effort.



**For the Holiday season, check
out the following web site,**

<http://www.knightarts.org/uncategorized/what-a-joyful-noise-650-singers-burst-into-hallelujah-as-part-of-random-act-of-culture%e2%80%a8%e2%80%a8%e2%80%a8>

Introducing the First Annual Maine 2 Meter FM Simplex Challenge (2X2 Contest)

*Sponsored by the Wireless Society of
Southern Maine*

The event takes place **Sunday, February 13th**, and runs for 4 hours, beginning at 1900 UTC (2PM EST), until 2300 UTC (6PM EST).

Contacts are limited to **FM Simplex on the 2 meter band**.

Object - Work as many stations in as many different towns or municipalities as possible.

Exchange will be your call sign, the name of the city, village, or town you are operating from, and your power level. (High = above 50 watts, Medium = 5 to 50watts, or Low = 5 watts or less).

Participants may be entered as either Fixed or Mobile, but not as both.

For more information, please visit the event website at:

<http://www.qsl.net/ws1sm/contest.html>

Point of Contact:
Tim Watson, KB1HZN
16 Hope Drive
Gorham, ME 04038
207-251-2568



Saltwater Antennas,

What your Navy is up to

MARA Honorary life member Paul Cecil Jr. KC5FKC of DeSoto, Texas said we should checkout the following website. An interesting idea in antennas:

<http://www.public.navy.mil/spawar/Pacific/TechTransfer/ProductsServices/Pages/SeaWaterAntennaSystem.aspx>

Just copy and paste this website address to your web browser address field.



Are you afraid of heights?
How about climbing 1768 feet
to the top of a tower!
Check this out.

http://www.liveleak.com/e/07b_1284580365



*The Merrymeeting
Amateur Radio
Association officers,
members of the executive
board and KS1R Trustee
want to wish all Squelch
Tales readers all the
happiness and joy this
Holiday season has to
offer.*

*May Santa fill your
stockings with Ham
Radio accessories and a
new whiz bang all-mode
multi-band transceiver be
under your tree.*

