



# January Newsletter

Volume 09, Issue 1

January 1, 2009



## WOSV

*St. Cloud Amateur Radio Club  
Celebrating 90 years on the airwaves*

### Message from the President - The Prez Sez...

As we start a new year for the Club I want to thank you all for your confidence that you place in myself and the officers of this fine organization.

It is only with the help of all members contributing what they are able that the club does well. I would encourage all of you to do what you can to keep the life in the club going and growing. I think we all can look at the new year as an opportunity to expand and improve on the

fine job that was done with Scott Hall at the helm.

As tough as it will be for me to talk less and listen more, I expect everyone to provide input of ideas goals to shoot for this year and for the future.

Thanks to all of you that serve the club and the community. Thank you for the Instructors and volunteer examiners, those who wielded the hammer and the saw for the new shed, those who worked

in the kitchen preparing food and treats, for those who mowed the lawn, moved the snow, carried out trash, repaired equipment, problem solved, donated special skills, materials, a smile and a helping hand and anything that brought honor and value to the club and its members and mission.

Thanks is too small a word.

Carry on We can do it!

Prez. Art -WAONJR

### Dates to Remember:

#### January:

Board Mtg	8th
General Mtg	15th

Feb Hamfest 14th

Feb Gen Meeting 19th

Mar Gen Meeting 19th

Apr Board Mtg 9th

Apr Gen Mtg 16th

May Gen Meeting 21st

June Gen Meeting 18th

June Field Day 27-28

July Board Mtg 9th

July Gen meeting 16th

Aug Gen Meeting 20th

Sept Gen Meeting 17th

Oct Board Meeting 8th

Oct Gen Meeting 15th

Nov Annual Meeting 20th

Dec Gen Meeting 17th

### "PUTTING IT DOWN"

By Thomas M. Hamblin, sine HN, VA3HN, VE3TMH, VE3HIE  
December 22, 2008

It was the fall of 1959 and I had been burning a hole in 3509 kHz as VE6TM for close to a year. After giving a few hints of what was to come, my dad sat me down at the kitchen table. He said that if I learned the family trade, I could have a good summer job to help pay for my university expenses. I agreed and my dad started to teach me American Morse telegraphy (AMT).

[American Morse is a telegraph code developed for use on electrical landline telegraph systems. It is different from the International Morse code used on the ham bands. — Ed.] Dad, sine Q, was then 69 years old and had held his first AMT job on the Chicago Terminal railroad (RR) in the summer of 1905 as a 15 year old kid. He had learned the family trade from his brother Bill who was 10 years older and a Western Union operator.

It took a while to catch on to the letter sounds made by the clacks and clicks of the

sounder. The sound certainly was different from International Morse code (CW) and the fact that the two codes (AMT and CW) differed by 11 letters, nine numbers and all of the punctuation presented a challenge. Nevertheless, already knowing CW gave me a leg up. Dad said I picked up AMT quicker than anyone else that he had taught. At that time you had to be 18 to be a RR AMT operator in Canada, so dad found a summer job for me as an assistant agent on the Canadian National Railway for the summer of 1960.

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## December General Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order on December 18th at 7:00 p.m. by President Scott Hall, NOUV. The meeting was jointly led with newly elected president Art Carlson, WAONJR.

The following newly elected officers are continuing or beginning their duties:

President—Art Carlson (WAONJR)  
Vice President—Dave Leigh (WODZW)  
Treasurer—Jerry Dahlager (KCOWCF)  
Secretary—Mike Parker (KCOUEA)  
Trustee—Larry Snodgrass (KCOSMM)

The November meeting minutes were accepted as printed in the December newsletter.

The Treasurer's report was as follows:

Checking	3,024.79
Savings	1,323.54
Rest. Savings	547.68
CD	<u>1,020.60</u>
Total Balance of	\$5,916.01

Treasurer's Report was accepted.

The new shed at the clubhouse is being populated with hamfest tables and other storage items. The shed is complete except for paint in the Spring, currently the exterior is primed.

A motion was made and passed to purchase \$100 worth or 5 tables of the white plastic folding tables when they are on a sale. These will be additional tables to rent at the hamfests.

The antenna for the echolink repeater at the clubhouse will be replaced and mounted higher when the weather gets warmer, for now the repeater is functional on it's existing antenna.

There was considerable discussion about the hamfest. It will be February 14th at the St. Cloud Armory, there will be VE testing and Chili, Hot dogs and bake sale items sold. Phil Jorgenson, N1ARM indicated that he and Art would change the announcement on the .015 repeater in January to announcement the Feb 14th Hamfest. We will mail out post cards like what has been done past years, although limited it size, postage is less expensive on

the postcards than a regular mail sized flyer. Many suggestions were made for improvements to the ham fest, to include better control of the entry points, making sure all people who enter through any of the exterior doors be paid entrees, perhaps by the use of some sort of around the neck color code identification— club members, vendors and general participants having different colors. Also want to control the length of time people are sitting at the food tables, keeping them open for people purchasing chili to be able to sit down to eat. Also hopefully the larger room will be available for VE testing to eliminate distractions the posed a problem last year due to the small room size. Overall the more people we have to help with the hamfest the smoother things will go— so please help if you can!

Many suggestions were made for improvements to the ham fest, ultimately the more club members who volunteer the better we will be able to run the Hamfest.

**We would love to have your help!**

Jack Maus, WOMBDB mentioned that there will be classes starting for new hams on January 4th, which will prepare them to take the test in February at the hamfest on the 14th. Bryant Julstrom, KCOZNG will also help with the classes. Please pass the word and encourage people to attend to become hams!

It was suggested and approved to send a Letter of Appreciation to Norm Bakken for his continued help with the .015 repeater repairs, also we will be granting him a lifetime member of the SCARC.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The difference between the Board meeting and General meeting is that only club members are allowed at the Board meetings, while anyone is allowed to the General Meetings.

Thanks to Brad Johannes, KBOHNN for his continued snow shoveling and plowing at the clubhouse!

It was reminded that all are welcome to join the Friday Lunch crowd, which is now held at Brigitts (near Arby's in St Cloud) at 11:30 each Friday.

At the January meeting there will be a key inventory—those who have keys to the clubhouse should bring their key with or know the number from it.

January 8th is the board meeting and January 15th is the general club meeting. The difference between the Board meeting and General meeting is that only club members are allowed at the Board meetings, while anyone is allowed to the General Meetings.

Devan Burnett, KCOKBH would have won the \$5 door prize if he had been present. The World Radio Subscriptions are gone and besides World Radio is moving to be an online publication, so a second \$5 door prize was given in the absence of the World Radio Subscription, which went to Larry Snodgrass, KCOSMM.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Mike Parker, KCOUEA.

**Please pay your 2009 club dues to Treasurer Jerry Dahlager, KCOWCF.**

## Volunteer Opportunities

### Hamfest 2009—February 14th

As the hamfest approaches and on the day of the hamfest many volunteers will be needed to plan, prepare and hold the Hamfest. We look forward to seeing you at the January & February club meetings to get involved!

### Tower Construction at the Clubhouse

A variance may not be necessary to install the tower due to language in the city ordinance. Someone is working on the needed paperwork for putting up the tower.

Construction will not begin until Summer '09.

## HAM License Classes

Spread the word!

Jack Maus, WOMBd and Bryant Julstrom, KCOZNG are offering classes to prepare new Hams for the Technician license test.

Classes will be held beginning Sunday January 4th, from 1p.m. to 3 p.m. and will be each Sunday 4 consecutive Sunday's with testing at the February 14th Hamfest.

If you are interested in studying to upgrade your license talk to Jack and/or Bryant.

## Current Board Members

### President

Art Carlson—WA0NJR—Elected

### Vice President

Dave Leigh - W0DZW - Elected

### Treasurer

Jerry Dahlager - KC0WCF - Elected

### Secretary

Mike Parker - KC0UEA - Elected

### Trustees

Larry Snodgrass - KC0SMM (2009 - 11)

Leonard Hopkins - KCONZF (2008 - 10)

Harold Hoffman - KC0FAX (2007 - 09)

### Past President

Scott Hall - N0UV

### Webmaster

Phil Jorgensen - N1ARM



To join the club's email reflector and/or to include your e-mail address on the private list shared between club members only, please email Mike, the newsletter editor at [kc0uea@gmail.com](mailto:kc0uea@gmail.com)



## Weblinks of Interest

[www.radioshackcatalogs.com](http://www.radioshackcatalogs.com)

For almost 65 years RadioShack produced a catalog to rival no other electronics and technology company. At this website you will be able to view these old RadioShack catalogs...year by year...page by page. All the way back to 1946.

[www.repeater-builder.com](http://www.repeater-builder.com)

How can you run out of things to read at this popular website? There are so many topics covered here focused on Ham radio—I would be surprised if you haven't been to it, but sure figured it should be shared just in case someone has overlooked it.

## "PUTTING IT DOWN" - Continued from Page 1

Then I worked the next two summers as an AMT Operator on the Canadian Pacific Railway in southern Alberta and British Columbia.

There wasn't much telegraph work on the job that I held in the summer of 1961, but I got enough practice so that I could copy 25 WPM on the ALL CAPS "mill" in the office. For those who have never encountered one, a mill is a typewriter without lower case letters. We used them to copy telegrams, train orders and for anything else that needed multiple carbon copies. Although I could copy 25 WPM on the mill at that time, I was sweating blood to do it because I was copying only a letter or two behind the transmission, at best. Any good CW or AMT operator will tell you that the secret to fast, easy copy is to be at least a full word behind. And if you are two or three words behind you can fill in almost any word from the context and from the fragment of the missed word.



### Hunting a Mill

In the early 1980s I resolved that I would buy a manual mill for CW use and this time I would learn to copy at least a word behind. I telephoned every typewriter shop in Toronto and asked for the oldest guy in the shop. I heard a number of sad stories about throwing out a mill the year before. But eventually I called a shop that recently had five Underwood Typemasters, all surplus from the Philippine air force! I was there in 20 minutes and I got the last one.

It was not that easy and it took a while, but I did learn to copy a word behind on the mill. Why did I persist? Why didn't I just stay with hand copy or head copy? The answers are satisfaction and relaxation. Being able to copy CW or AMT on a mill was one of the marks of a skilled professional telegrapher. It gives me great satisfaction to honor the memory of the thousands of professional telegraphers and their jobs that once were. And believe it or not, copying behind on the mill is relaxing. Once you have the technique you won't want to copy any other way. What about head copy? Well that is exactly what you do when you copy behind on straight text. You copy in your head, you mentally fill in any missing word and then you put the text down on paper a word or more behind the sender. Typing it just happens to be faster and easier than writing it. What do you do if you miss a number? Then you break the sender and ask for an actual fill.

I hope there are some CW operators reading this who will be intrigued by the idea of learning or relearning the new-old skill of putting it down on the mill. Believe me; it will be really satisfying if you do it! For an operator new to the mill I have four hints.

### Using a Mill — Some Hints

First, the most important thing is to not give up. Practice, practice, practice! This will be worth the effort.

Second, if you can type 40 WPM, you will quickly be able to copy CW on the mill at 20 WPM or more. Start with what I call the "bursting" technique and smooth it out later as you get better. Listen to the word coming at you, recognize it and then type it in a burst before the next word starts. Remember to stay behind! If you don't recognize the word, hit the space bar five or six times and keep on going.

Hint number three is that when you are able to miss a word, hit the space bar and not worry about it, you have arrived! Even better, if you can hesitate, listen to the next word or two, fill in the missing word and continue copying without a break — you could hold a professional telegraph job, if there was one to hold.

The final hint is to avoid the distraction of watching your copy. I usually stare off into space or close my eyes and let the copy just flow out of my fingers. I did say this is relaxing! Incidentally, you don't have to be a touch typist. I knew lots of operators who would copy behind off the wire while hunting and pecking with great glee.

### The IBM Selectric — A Good Substitute

You can start learning how to put it down by copying on your computer keyboard, either with or without the CAPS lock on. There is nothing wrong with combining some new technology with an old skill. In fact, if you are going to be a real high speed operator, the computer keyboard is probably the best way to copy.



HN in the operating position of VE3TNH in 2000.

*(Continued on Next Page...)*

## "PUTTING IT DOWN" - Continued from Previous Page

If you are a boat anchor operator, you may want to find a manual mill to match your vintage gear. My advice is to phone all the typewriter shops and then advertise if necessary. Good luck! Just remember that on a mill there are no lower case letters. Therefore you can't use the letter l as the number 1 as you would on a manual standard typewriter. On a manual (non-electric) mill, you will find the number 1 located on the top row where the 2 would be located on a manual standard typewriter (above and between the Q and W). The number 2 and the higher numbers will be on the top row but displaced one key to the right from where they are on a manual standard typewriter.

Today it is much easier to find an IBM Selectric with an ALL CAPS ball than to find a manual mill. This is still a match for a boat anchor shack because some Selectrics were used in last decades of the commercial CW era. IBM calls this font Manifold because it is well suited to punching multiple carbon copies. On the Selectric the number 1 is above and to the left of the Q, so that the rest of the numbers are not displaced to the right. The Selectric keyboard has a wonderful feel to it, much nicer than many computer keyboards.

At my former QTH, VE3TMH, I fed my Selectric with a roll of teletype (TTY) paper that afterwards spools over the back of the well in my desk and onto the floor. From time-to-time I enjoy ripping off 5 or 6 feet of accumulated ragchew copy, balling it up and tossing it into the cylindrical file. A box of accordion-fold printer paper would make a fine substitute for TTY paper, which may be a bit hard to find today. In the photograph of my country station, VA3HN, you can see my manual Underwood ALL CAPS mill in the homebrew well that I cut into my \$10 desk. I also have a manual Royal portable mill with United States Navy markings that I use portable (only 25 pounds!) as VE3HIE/QRP (low power operation).

### Keeping the Mills Going

American Morse telegraphy was an honest and skilled trade that lifted many poor men, and some women as well, into the middle class. For many operators it was a step on the way into management or into other successful careers — Thomas Edison, Andrew Carnegie, Jesse Bunnell and Gene Autry immediately spring to mind. Being able as a kid to hold a man's job and receive a man's wage in my father's trade was very important to me. Alas, I was one of the last to learn the trade and within about 15 years the march of progress took every AMT operator's job. Eventually the same thing happened to commercial and military CW operators. And now even the 5 WPM CW requirement for radio amateurs is gone. Nevertheless, there are still thousands of CW operators in Amateur Radio — we will carry on!

I always mention during an on-air conversation (QSO) that I am copying on my mill. This often brings a nostalgic response from an ex-military operator. Once or twice I have found that the other operator was copying me on his mill. Joy! So again I say that I hope this article will encourage some of you to expand your CW skill by learning the joy of putting it down on the mill. We have a straight key night and a bug night. Maybe we could have a mill night!

In case we meet on the air, I should say now that I am definitely not a high speed operator. 30 WPM in CW and 20 WPM in AMT are about my limits for good copy on the mill — but I do love it. Also, when I send, "OP HN, OP HN," in a QSO, I am giving you my personal sine, HN, instead of my name. My dad gave HN to me when I copied my first telegram as the operator at SF (Taber, Alberta) in early July 1961. Personal sines were once common in ham radio but only a few operators use them now.

### "Putting It Down," a Telegrapher's Poem

"PUTTING IT DOWN" is the only poem I have ever written. (Limericks don't count. HI.) My feelings about AMT, CW and the skill and pleasure of putting it down are quite obvious in the poem. The first draft of this poem was read to the Durham Region QRP club by the author, Thomas M. Hamblin, sine HN, VA3HN, VE3TMH, VE3HIE, on the occasion of the club's Field Day planning meeting on June 19, 2001. They were good operators, but they didn't have much of an ear for poetry!

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*Thomas M. Hamblin, sine HN, VA3HN, VE3TMH, VE3HIE, was first licensed in 1958 as VE6TM. During the summers of 1961 and 1962 he followed the family trade, working as an American Morse telegrapher on the Canadian Pacific Railroad. He is the president of the Maple Leaf chapter of the Morse Telegraph Club. He has B Eng and M Eng degrees in electrical engineering from McGill University and retired in May 2008 to his country QTH. HN's sole operating modes are CW and American Morse, always preferring to copy on his mill. Interests include reading the mail, frequent low power operation, operating boat anchor rigs, ragchewing, ARRL Field Day with VE3QDR, Moxon wire beams and making little modifications to the 10 CW rigs at his two operating positions. He can be reached at 9798 Trew Road, RR1 Campbellcroft, Ontario, Canada, LOA 1B0.*

Article from: <http://www.arrl.org/news/features/2008/12/22/10519/>

### PUTTING IT DOWN

Fft-fft, fft-fft, fft-fft, bang.

Putting it down while sitting behind,

Word by word and ten to the line

On an ALL CAPS MILL still smooth and fine,

My Underwood relic from a bygone time.

Behind the sender, rough or smooth.

No bulls in my copy, maybe a fill if I choose.

Fingers flying, just stroking those keys.

If there was a job to hold, I could hold it with ease.

Once we were legion, brothers and sisters of the  
key,

We moved the traffic on the land, in the air and  
across every sea.

Of skill we had plenty, but no amount could stop  
The march of progress that took every job.

The Morse wires are long silent,

Military and commercial CW, they're gone now too.

There's really no one left to carry on

Except for hams like me and you.

So I'm in a ragchew on 40 with a couple of the boys,  
And I'm putting it down through the QRM and the  
noise.

Progress took the jobs, but it couldn't take the joy  
Of putting it down while sitting behind.

Fft-fft, fft-fft, fft-fft, bang.

73 and 30, the pleasure is still mine.

Sig HN

"Putting It Down," Copyright reserved, T. M. Hamblin, Dec 20, 2006.

## Local Repeater Info

Clubhouse Phone: 320-255-1410

E-mail: [webinfo@w0sv.org](mailto:webinfo@w0sv.org)

E-mail Reflector:  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/scarcmn/>

To send to the reflector and all those signed up for the reflector, send your email to:  
[scarcmn@yahogroups.com](mailto:scarcmn@yahogroups.com)

**On the Web @  
WWW.W0SV.ORG**

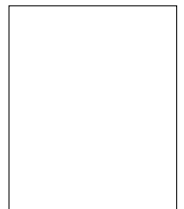
Repeater	Offset	Tone	Location
147.015	+	PL 100.0	Collegeville, MN
146.940	-	Autopatch	St. Cloud, MN
146.835	-	PL 85.4	St. Cloud, MN
147.105	+	PL 85.4	Avon, MN
224.800	-	No Tone	St. Joseph, MN
444.350	+	No Tone	St. Cloud, MN
442.225	+	No Tone	St. Cloud, MN
443.650	+	PL 85.4	Avon, MN
145.270	-	No Tone	Paynesville, MN
147.255	+	No Tone	Sauk Centre, MN
146.520		Simplex	Nationwide Simplex
146.640		Simplex	Nationwide Simplex



If you have any additions, corrections or suggestions for this newsletter, please email the editor, Mike Parker, KCOUEA at [KCOUEA@yahoo.com](mailto:KCOUEA@yahoo.com)

### St. Cloud Amateur Radio Club

401 4th Street North  
 Waite Park, MN 56387



## About the St. Cloud Amateur Radio Club

The St. Cloud Amateur Radio Club is 88 years strong! It all started back in 1921 with Robert "Bob" Witchen, WØSV, licensed as 9SV. The St. Cloud Radio Club call is registered as WØSV in honor of Bob Witchen, first licensed ham in the area. Since then, the club has grown by leaps and bounds serving in many useful ways among the surrounding tri-county area. For a more detailed history visit our website at: [www.w0sv.org](http://www.w0sv.org)

