

Classic Exchange Newsletter Winter 2025

CQ CX de K3MSB.....

Another CX has come and gone. At the top of Cycle 25 we all expected 10M and 15M to be in play, but as most found out, 10M was abysmal with 15M not far behind. Surprisingly, I and others found 80M to be abandoned, and I do like to be on 80M just before sunset to pick up regional stations. Once again, 20M and 40M were the money bands.

Several people have made comments to me about the CX in general, and I'd like to address them there. The first is digital QRM. One CXer said "Am I the only one who has found digital stations to start up exactly on my crystal frequencies?" I assume we're talking about FT-8 and FT-4. The answer is that neither of those protocols listen first before transmitting on their normal cycles. I don't like it any more than anyone else, but that's the reality of the playing field we are in. Aside from writing an NPRM to the FCC to put all digital transmissions in their own dedicated sub band, I can not see anything changing. What could be done is to move down lower than we're accustomed to. For instance, on 40M, we could drop below 7045 and make use of frequencies above 7025. Unfortunately, that doesn't help the "rock-bound" ops. Standard FT-4 / FT-8 frequencies are published; folks may want to know and avoid them if possible.

CX Format. "It would be nice if this was referred to as an event instead of a contest, or at least promote rag chewing too. Contest to me promote nothing but quick exchanges with points, kind of sole less. That's fine for a real contest but we're just a bunch that are running vintage gear for fun and there is not a lot of us. It may help suggest more rag chewing instead of dine and dash."

Let it be noted that the CX has always been referred to as an "Event", and never as a contest. Rag chewing has never been prohibited or frowned upon, but there's no way I can mandate rag chewing, except possibly as a bonus (see next section). Quite a while ago, we made two categories for the CX, "3 or fewer transmitter / receiver pairs" and "4 or more transmitter / receiver pairs". This was done as it was observed that the CX had evolved into two distinct interests. One was those stations that had the proverbial "wall of radios" and were interested in getting the maximum number of radios on the air in the shortest amount of time. These people typically do CX exchanges with some close friends and calling CQ CX in general is not top priority for them. This is fine. After all, the CX is about getting old radios on the air. And, if you can get 57 radios on the air in one weekend, brother, my hat's off to you! The other group wanted a more laid back event, calling CQ CX in general and listening for that weak response in the ether just like we did in our Johnny Novice days. Rag chews are more common in this group. Once you qualify your 3 radios, the pressure is off.

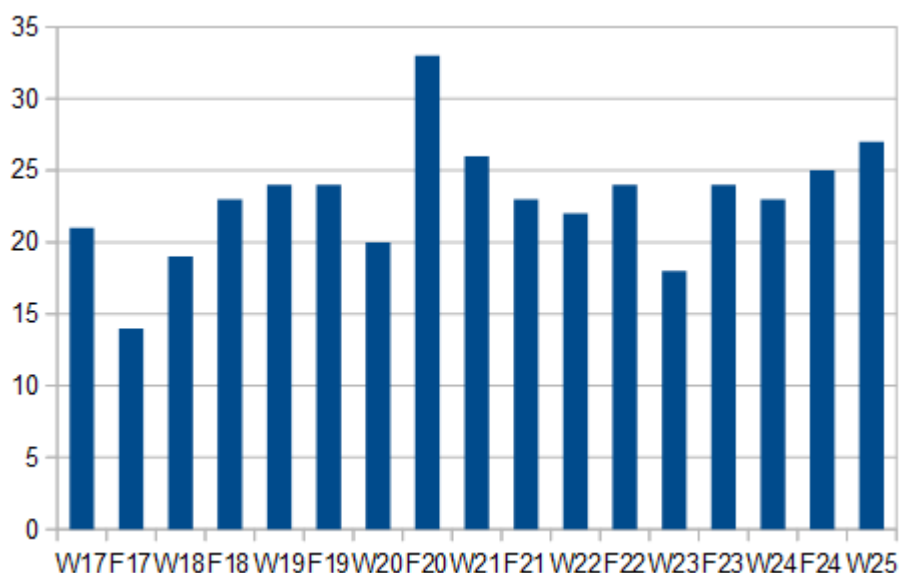
Bonus Points. Groan. If there's one topic that Ron K2RP and I hated to address was that of Bonus Points. We went "round and round" on this topic trying to come up with "innovative" bonus points, and never came up with anything solid. The topic of what I'll call "Operational Bonus Points" was discussed a number of times. Examples of this would be the number of states worked, getting 1000 points for each contact over 1000 miles, bonus points for 10M and 15M contacts etc. Note that years ago the number of states was part of the scoring formula. I, and apparently nobody else, knows why

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this was removed. The CX History web page states “the multiplier would come from the combined age of all the equipment put on the air”. The CX is about getting old radios on the air and squirting RF without taking into account your antenna system or the vagaries of propagation, and this is why I and previous CX organizers are leery of adding in Operational Bonus Points. This applies to bonus points for rag chews; rag chews per se are not the main focus of the CX.

Next item..... why don't I shout out newcomers to the CX? Because I don't always know it's people's first time unless they mention it! We don't keep attendance records for CXers! That being said..... Let's welcome Glenn K3SWZ of New Cumberland PA and Jay W6CJ from Los Angeles CA to the CX!

One indication of how well the CX is doing is indicated by the number of log submissions. Here's the data from 2017 to present:



The vertical axis is the number of log submissions, while the horizontal axis is the event name (W17 is Winter 2017, F21 is Fall 2021 etc). If we exclude Fall 2020 as a data outlier (it was the “COVID Year”), we can see two things. First, we have a core cadre of CXers as indicated by a submission rate of between 20 and 25. Second, the Winter 2025 event had the most log submissions since 2017!

Note that the above graph is “log submissions” and not “participants”! Looking through the logs there are quite a few people that play in the CX but do not submit a log. This is disappointing for one very big reason, and it's not because we're missing an additional log. It's because we're missing people's stories – their soapbox and pictures that so many of us like to read!

When I took over as CX Newsletter editor from Mac WQ8U in 2017, I changed the format of the newsletters to make them more robust from web page HTML changes by making the newsletters in

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pdf format. While the pre-2017 newsletters (from 2002) are not on the CX website, I have them safely stored away and plan on converting them to pdf format. When that is done, we'll have close to a quarter of a century of photos and stories of people that share our love of radios that glow in the dark; photos and stories from those people that are now gone, but were once part of the cadre of dedicated CXers that made the CX what it is!

If you have suggestions for event bonuses, format changes,.... or just how you think the CX can be improved..... I won't know it if you don't email me!

With that, let's get to it! Lots of good stuff in this newsletter and I hope you enjoy it.

73 Mark K3MSB
CX Organizer & Newsletter Editor

The Sweet Chirp Awards!



Congratulations!

Glenn K3SWZ - HT-40

Mike W7DRA - DX-20 "an ear pleasing chirp"

W8KGI Jim - HB 6146 Transmitter "Blue Ribbon Best Sounding Chirp"

W7ESN Mark - Elmac AF-67 "Red Ribbon Second Best Chirp Award"

VE7CNF Toby - BC-459A "he can "chirp" with the best"

VA7MM Mark - BC-459A

W7OS Dcc -- Hammarlund HX-50A "chirping like no tomorrow."

Most Unusual Sounding Signal Award

W8KGI Jim. -- Collins 32RA transmitter - “the dit and dahs would sometimes change frequency within the same Morse character. It was very entertaining to listen to”

I Never Give Up Award

KR7W Ricky -- HW-7. 6 QSOs, 1.8W, Using a 40M NVIS fence dipole.

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CW Only Scores

4 Or More Pairs

CALL	NAME	SCORE
N6KN	Rocco	418,744
K2RP	Ron	137,372
WB2AWQ	Howie	115,636
W8KGI	Jim	93,572
VE7CNF	Toby	46,662
W7FOX	Chris	41,065
VA7MM	Mark	28,782
KR7W	Ricky	23,296
K3MD	John	6,275

3 Or Fewer Pairs

CALL	NAME	SCORE
K3MSB	Mark	26,264
K9VKY	Brian	20,420
VE7UTS	Halden	19,032
KG5IEE	Randall	15,984
K4BSK	Earl	11,424
KE5AKL	Mike	10,080
W7OS	Doc	8,904
N5GW	Gene	8,398
N2DA	Craig	7,020
W8MND	Bill	4,370
W7DRA	Doc	3,790
WB4SBP	Randy	3,122
NZ0T	Bill	3,080
K3SWZ	Glenn	1,270
AA2YK	Ernie	650
NV1X	Bob	600
VE7BGP	Gerry	564
W6CJ	Jay	520

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Phone Only Scores

4 Or More Pairs

CALL	NAME	SCORE
N6KN	Rocco	206,976
K2RP	Ron	122,995
VE7BGP	Gary	8,500

3 Or Fewer Pairs

CALL	NAME	SCORE
VE7UTS	Halden	3,984
W8KGI	Jim	3,600
W7FOX	Chris	878

Mixed (Phone + CW) Scores

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4 Or More Pairs

CALL	NAME	CW SCORE	PHONE SCORE	TOTAL
N6KN	Rocco	418,744	206,976	625,720
K2RP	Ron	137,372	122,995	260,367
WB2AWQ	Howie	115,636		115,636
W8KGI	Jim	93,572		93,572
VE7CNF	Toby	46,662		46,662
W7FOX	Chris	41,065		41,065
VA7MM	Mark	28,782		28,782
KR7W	Ricky	23,296		23,296
VE7BGP	Gary		8,500	8,500
K3MD	John	6,275		6,275

3 Or Fewer Pairs

CALL	NAME	CW SCORE	PHONE SCORE	TOTAL
K3MSB	Mark	26,264		26,264
VE7UTS	Halden	19,032	3,984	23,016
K9VKY	Brian	20,420		20,420
KG5IEE	Randall	15,984		15,984
K4BSK	Earl	11,424		11,424
KE5AKL	Mike	10,080		10,080
W7OS	Doc	8,904		8,904
N5GW	Gene	8,398		8,398
N2DA	Craig	7,020		7,020
W8MND	Bill	4,370		4,370
W7DRA	Doc	3,790		3,790
W8KGI	Jim		3,600	3,600
WB4SBP	Randy	3,122		3,122
NZ0T	Bill	3,080		3,080
K3SWZ	Glenn	1,270		1,270
W7FOX	Chris		878	878
AA2YK	Ernie	650		650
NV1X	Bob	600		600
VE7BGP	Gerry	564		564
W6CJ	Jay	520		520

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NV1X – Bob Milton VT

Bob writes

My rig was my novice station, the same Eico 723 that I built as a kid (age 12-13).

I didn't get on as much as I would have liked, but always enjoy just using the vintage gear - working VA7MM was a thrill!



Eico 723 transmitter (2nd from left on the bottom) and RME-69 receiver. Note Bob's pile of "rocks" in front of his Eico!

Looking forward to the next CX!

73 Bob

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**WB2AWQ – Howie
Reno NV**

Howie writes:

Howdy CXers!

I Started the CX a bit late (as usual) running some of my favorite gear, the trusty GO-9 and my HRO from 1938, both military sets. Started off with KE5AKL Mike in NM on 40M. 40M produced some 35 QSOs while 20M produced about 29. Zero QSOs on 80M this year it seems like 80M has fallen out of favor with CXers at least here on the west coast. Only one QSO on 15M, and that was a struggle with Mark K3MSB. Conditions were just not that hot; 15M usually produces a fair number of QSOs for me. I managed to qualify a record (for me) number of CX gear: some 21 pieces for 1809 CX years. I'm also claiming a bonus in CX for my HB receiver, a copy of the Millen Single Signal Receiver from 1932 QST.



*GO-9 1940, my ORIGINAL Novice BC-348Q 1943,
HRO SR 1938 plus an LM-18*

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*HB 1932 Millen Single Signal built by W4AWS (SK),
behind it a Hallicrafters SX-62 and a Viking Navigator*



Swan 350 ("powerhouse radio")



Most recent acquisition, Kenwood TS-530SP hybrid radio

I met the usual "accidental" CX crashers, all running modern gear: VA7JCF John, K7KPB Dan, WA6ARA, Nike, NA7DO, Aldo, KF7MCO John, WA6VWW Don (with whom I've had many QSOs), and Brian KM6ZX. Hi to all and welcome to CX!

I ran into some long time CXers NZ0T Bill, W7FOX Fox, and VE7XF Ralph (it's been a

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while since I heard you on CX), welcome back!

Others, who run old gear, NU6F Ron right here in Reno who runs old mil gear, K7SF Steve who has some really esoteric CX gear including a Heath SS9000 and a Signal One Military 1030, WB8APR John who has a nice collection of oldies, W0CCA Cap who was running a TS-539SP, AE6C Denny who also has a nice collection, and WN6Q AF who was running an Alinco DX-77 and a HB regen with transistors. Welcome to CX, hope you come back!

There were the usual “chirpers” on CX this year, including W7ESN Mark with his Morrow gear, his HB gear, and the unusual Hagenuk RX, Toby with his BC-459A that he can “chirp” with the best, VA7MM Mark from BC with another BC-459 and W7OS Doc with a Hammarlund HX-50A chirping like no tomorrow.

And where would we be without the Canadian BC crowd, VE7CNF, VE7UTS, VE7XF, and VA7MM? They make lots of noise in CX! See you all next Fall!

73, Howie WB2AWQ

N2DA – Craig Forest VA

Craig writes:

I had a blast this year on CW, with very nice band conditions for the old HW-100 and my novice station (when I had the call WN3OWX) of a Knight T-60 transmitter and BC-348-Q receiver that I was given around 1967 by my uncle who was a Navy electronics tech. Lots of great old equipment out there, many with the enjoyable chirp sound of the tube era! Due to time constraints I didn't operate the phone dates much at all, but did manage to make one side-band contact during the contest. Here are pics of the rigs I operated this year:

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Knight T-60, BC-348-Q, Autek audio filter.

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Heathkit HW-100

I built the HW-100 in 1970 while in high school and it still runs well today!.

73,
Craig N2DA

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K2RP -- Ron Encinitas CA

Ron sent in some photos of his various setups:



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**K2WI – Rob
Hopewell NJ**

It was a pleasure working both of Rob's stations, a TRC-77a and TCK/RAL on Sunday!

Rob reported:

I started at 1445Z on 40m with NVIS propagation in full swing. The 3 QSOs I made in that hour were all in PA, including Mark K3MSB with his SCR-274N. Mark ended up being the only one of my 9 QSOs using mil gear. I was running my TRC-77a and a dipole.

In the late afternoon(40m again) I made one QSO with the TRC-77a and then switched to my TCK/RAL combo. I had told W1GF earlier while running the TRC-77a to look for me with another combo and I told him he would be able to tell the difference. An hour later I answered his CQ with the TCK and he said, "U were right" ;<)

73

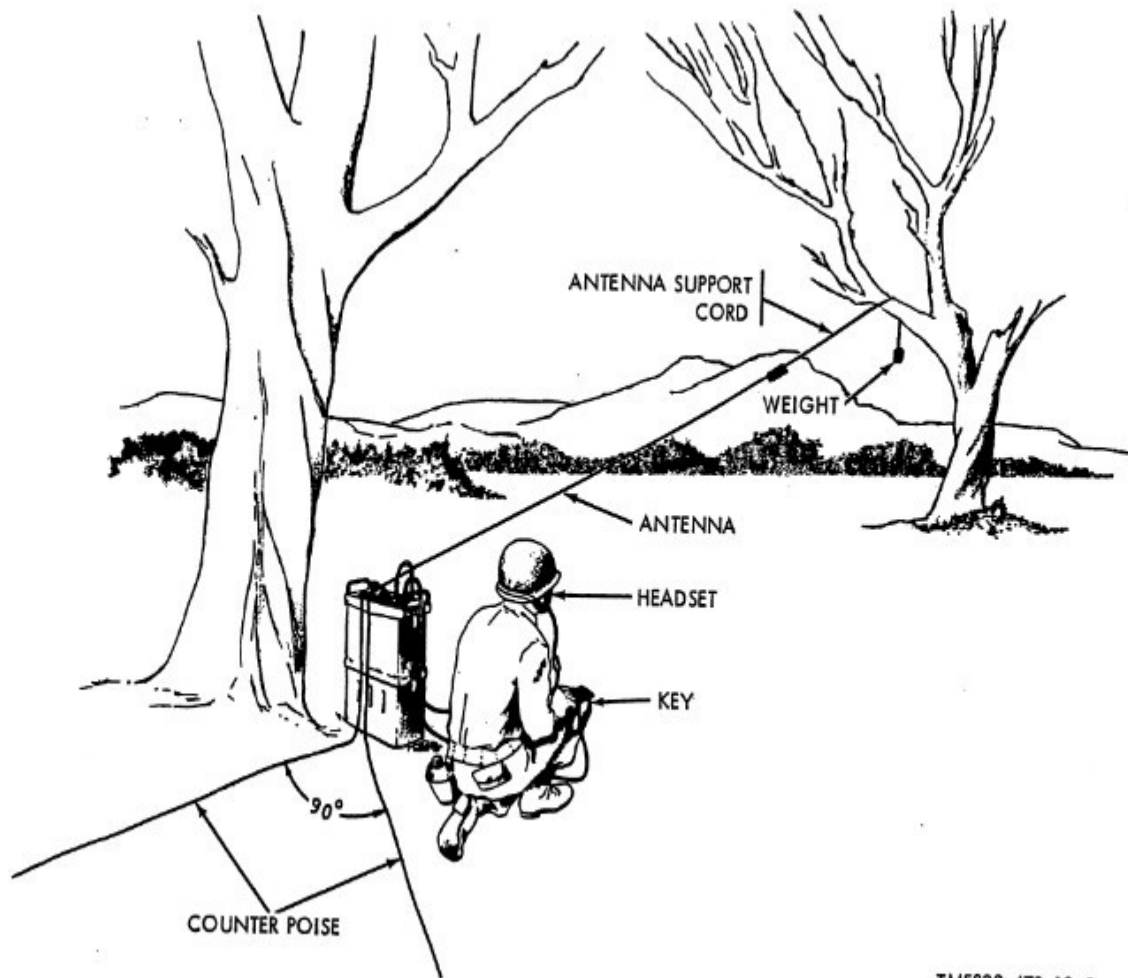
ZUT DE K2WI



Rob's TRC-77a Transceiver

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The TRC-77a is a field portable transceiver from the early to mid 1960's having a frequency range of 3 to 8 Mc and a power output of 10-14 Watts. The TM 11-5820-473-12 Technical Manual shows the following as a typical installation:

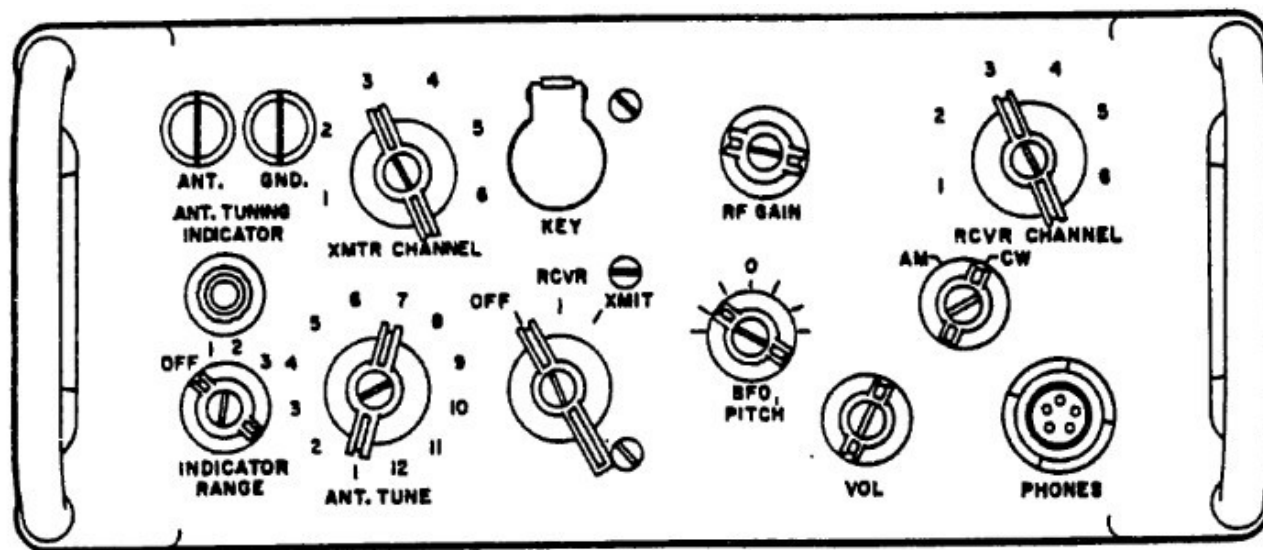


TM5820-473-12-5

Figure 2-2. Typical radio set installation.

It can transmit on 6 channels and receive on 6 different channels. This is more evident from a drawing of the front panel:

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Note there is a “KEY” jack, and an “AM/CW” switch, but no “MIC” jack. One might think the MIC jack is on the rear panel, but that's not correct. The radio can only transmit on CW but can receive CW, MCW, and AM. While not specified in the manual, SSB reception is also possible.

The manual states the maximum keying speed is 300 WPM!! How is this possible? Well, it was intended that a Morse code burst encoder such as the AN/GRA-71 be used. The device would send short recorded messages at very high CW rates in order to minimize time on the air and thus reduce the possibility of detection in the field. Lots of neat info on the AN/GRA-71 on the web!

The following photo of Rob's TCK / RAL combo is about as far from a portable field radio as you can get!

The TCK is a WW II vintage radio intended for use on US Navy ships or shore installations. Rob's TCK, serial number 14, has a date of 1943 which indicates the TCK was introduced during the middle of WW II. Depending on the model variant, it weighs in at about 275 pounds. It is rated at 400 Watts CW and 100 Watts AM and has a frequency range of 2 Mc to 18 Mc in six bands.

Different variants were powered by 115 or 230 volts DC, 220 or 440 volts 3 phase 60 Hz AC, or 115 volts single phase 60 Hz AC.

The TCK uses 11 tubes including 837s for the Master Oscillator and Intermediate Power Amplifier, an 813 for the power amplifier, and an 807 for the modulator.

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TCK Transmitter (left) RAL Receiver (bottom right)

Rob indicated that it is not trivial to re-tune to go between 40M and 80M.

Rob's receiver is a WW II vintage RAL and first saw service in 1935. It covers 0.3 to 23 Mc in 6 bands. According to the Navy Catalog of Electronic Equipment “the RAL consists of two stages of TRF, one regenerative detector, low-pass filter, first AF and output output”.

The radio employs 6 tubes: 4 type 6D6 (R-F Amplifiers, Detector and Audio), and 2 type 41 (Output

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and AVC.), while the associated power supply contains 1 type -5Z3 (Rectifier), 1 type -(874 Voltage Regulator), and 1 type -876 (Current Regulator). The RAL weighs in at 69 pounds while the power supply is 41 pounds.

AA2YK – Ernie Modena NY

Ernie ran a very nice novice stations in the CX consisting of a Heathkit DX-60 transmitter, HG-10 VFO, and Drake 2A receiver:



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K3MD – John Winfield PA

John entered the CW event with two stations: a Knight T-60 and Drake 2C as well as a Heathkit DX-60 and Drake TR-3 (for receive).

K3MSB – Mark Airville PA

I Started off Sunday morning at 1300Z on 40M CW and quickly qualified the 40M radios in my SCR-274N military system (BC-459A TX and BC-455A RX) by working Earl K4BSK running a Kenwood TS-440S, Bill W8MND running a Viking Ranger 2 and Drake R4, and Ben K4HGS (SKCC QSO) running an IC-7800.



SCR-274N. Two transmitters bottom left, 3 receivers bottom right.

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The above photo shows a HB anvil made by my grandfather which acts as a vibration dampener and heat sink for the SCR-27N's BC-456 28V dynamotor. In CW the dynamotor runs constantly. In actual military use, CW was rarely used on this system except for short transmissions from a plane so a ground station could provide a DF bearing to the plane. Running constantly, the dynamotor gets hot, and even the heat sink gets warm!

I made a quick change to 20M CW running my DX-60B / HG-10B and R-390A to work Mike KE5AKL on his Ten Tec Corsair.

Afterwards, it was back to 40M CW on my SCR-274N. I worked WG9P Mike running a Viking 2 and 75A4. The next QSO was with the museum ship USS Olympia's Club Station WA3BAT. Gerry N3HAM was running a Kenwood TS-140 from the radio room of the Philadelphia based ship. Next in line was W3PD John on his Heathkit HX-1681 and Hammarlund HQ-180.

A real treat for me was next, a military radio to military radio QSO with K2WI Rob who was running a 1960's vintage TRC-77a transceiver.

I took a break and returned to complete qualifying my DX-60B / R-390A setup by working N5GW

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Gene running his SB-102 on 20M. Next I changed to 15M to work Howie WB2AWQ on his FT-101EE. I gave Howie a 329 RST and received a 439 from him; 15M was none too good.



DX-60B with HG-10B (top) R-390A (bottom)

I then changed to 40M to work first time CX'er K3SWZ Glenn near Harrisburg PA. Glenn was running a rock bound Hallicrafters HT-40 with a Drake 2B receiver. I've know Glenn for over 20 years and have been bugging him to join the CX, and I'm delighted he took the plunge! Welcome Glenn!

After I short break, I returned to the CX with my DX-60B /R-390 Combo. I heard W7FOX on 10M around 1810Z but the band was such that we could not complete the contact. I made no contacts on 10M for the entire CX. I changed to 20M and, between 1826 and 2106Z I worked the following stations: K4BSK Earl on his Collins 32S3 & 75S3, W1GF Greg on his Drake B twins and L7 Linear Amplifier, N6KN Rocco running a 32S3 and 75A3, W8MND Bill on his Viking Ranger 2 and Drake R4, KE5AKL Mike on a TS-530SP, KR7W Nick on his HW-101, KC2LXD Rod on an FT-991A, and finally VE7XF Ralph on a Viking 2 and NC-303.

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Supper time! Afterward I got on 80M attempting to qualify the 80M radios in my SCR-274N (BC-696A TX and BC-454A RX) and worked W4BOH "WC" on his Kenwood 599 Twins. I then proceeded to call CQ on 80M for about 10 minutes with no responses. Hmm. This did not bode well for 80M I thought.....

So, I switched back to 20M with my DX-60 and R-390A and worked NZ0T Bill on his SB-102 and VE7CNF Toby running a Valiant 2 and SX-71.

Around 2100Z I went back to 80M on my SCR-274N and worked N1QY Ron running a Knight T-150 and Ten Tec Omni.. Great. QSO #2 for the mil radio..... Called CQ for a while longer on 80M and nothing heard. Need one more 80M QSO.....

I went to 20M and worked WB0SND Mike who was running a 32V2 and 75A4... along with a HB amplifier at 900W based around a 3CX3A tube. I had my 3 element yagi pointed west towards Mike and he was "swingin' the monkey's tail" on my R-390A:



After taking a short break I decided to climb back on 80M as I needed one more QSO to qualify the 80M radios in the SCR-274N. 80M Was ugly. Nasty noise. I called for a while and finally a very weak station called me. It took me several times to get the call and I must admit I wondered if it was worth it, but I figured if he was sticking in there to work me I was going to stick in there as well. And I'm glad I did! The station was VE9QR Bruce in Sackville New Brunswick. I was not expecting a CX contact but I indeed got one! Bruce was running a DX-60 and HQ-129! That qualified the 80M radios for the SCR-274N – thanks for the call Bruce!

At 0130Z Monday (Sunday night EDT) I went to 20M and had two QSOs with VA7MM Mark. For

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the first contact Mark was running an FT-101ZD and for the second contact he was running a DX-60B and Drake 2C.

Thus ended the Sunday part of the CX and I had all my radios qualified. 10M and 15M were terrible, as was 80M, and I hoping for an improvement for the Tuesday part of the CX.

I got on 40M Tuesday at 1300Z using my SCR-274N and worked CX'ers K4BSK Earl on his Eico 720 and HQ-120, K1PUT Hank on his Ten Tec Triton 4, and then K2WI Rob running is Navy TCK and RAL – another mil radio to mil radio contact! I switched over to my DX-60B / R-390A and gave Rob a second contact for his most excellent TCK / RAL combo.

Next I traded several QSOs with different band / radio combos with my good friend Ken N3CU who lives about 10 miles from me.

After that, I worked Glenn K3SWZ on 40M with my SCR-274N. Glenn was on his HT-40 and we had a nice “chirpfest” for a few minutes!

Next, it was Gene N5GW on 15M; Gene was running his Ten Tec Triton 544 at 80W.

After a while it was back to 20 where I worked KG5IEE Randall on his TR-4, N5GW on his Triton 544, W8MND Bill running a DX-40 and Drake R-4, and K4BSK Earl on a TS-440.

Tuesday mid-afternoon I decided to brave 15M again and was able to hook up again with Gene N5GW who was running his SB-102. I thought 15M had some promise so called CQ a while but the only reply I got was from Emil HB9FNN in Bern Switzerland. He was running a modern radio but I swung the beam and we had a nice DX-60B to IC-7300 chat. Emil knew what a DX-60 was and said he enjoyed hearing the vintage radio on the air.

Later that afternoon I returned to 20M and worked NZ0T Bill on his SB-102, then a well known pair of Canadians! VE7CNF Toby on his Valiant 2 and HQ-129X then VE7UTS Halden on his Signal One CX-7A. I'd have to check my CX logs over the years, but I think this is the first time I've ever worked a CX-7A (of course I've drooled over the ads in QSTs of old.....)

Around 5:30 PM I was calling CQ on 20M and was answered by DL6RDR Stephan in Landshut Germany. Why I make note of this is that he was running an Apache Labs ANAN-G2 100W SDR and I was on my DX-60B ! I found it cool for two so different technologies to be in communications.

Afterwards, my final 20M contact was with Howie WB2AWQ on his SB-102.

Tuesday Evening (around 0200Z Tuesday) I tried 80M but to no avail, so I went to 40M on my DX-60B for one final round of CX. I worked VA7MM Mark on his BC-459A and HRO. I was tempted to switch to my SCR-274N, but it was powered down and Mark wasn't that strong in the R-390A, so elected to not do so. Made a few other contacts but all folks with modern radios.

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For the CW event, 10M produce no QSOs and only 3 QSOs on 15M – one with Howie WB2AWQ in NV and 2 with Gene N5GW in MS. As mentioned before, the contact with Howie on 15M was really tough. 80M Seemed to be a non-player in this CX. Bad propagation and high noise levels. I was glad to eke out the 3 QSOs over both days to qualify my radios. Again, 20M and 40M were the money bands. I expected more from 10 and 15 at the height of the Solar Cycle, but in all honesty, I've not been impressed with this Solar Cycle.

**K3SWZ – Glenn
New Cumberland PA**

Glenn writes:

First CX event. Thanks Mark! I have had this HT-40 for a number of years and never had it on the air. My fault! Next time, I will be more prepared.. Too many digital signals on or near my crystal frequencies!



[Editor's Comments: I've known Glenn for over 20 years and I'm delighted my harassment has finally paid off and he finally entered a CX! Glad to work you Glenn!]

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K4BSK – Earl Matthews NC

Earl has been a CX regular for years. For the Winter 2025 event he qualified his TS-440S, Collins 32S3 / 75S3B, and Eico 720 / HQ-120 stations on CW.

WB4SPB – Randy Tacoma WA

In addition to operating his HW-16, Randy operated this very nice Drake station in the CW part of the event:



Drake R-4B, Dentron Super Tuner, and Drake T-4X.

Note the HB Key Randy was using! Well done OM !

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KE5AKL – Mike Albuquerque, NM

Mike used his TenTec Corsair (Model 560) and Kenwood TS-530SP for the CW event and made a tidy 60 QSO!

N5GW – Gene Jackson MS

It's always nice to hear N5GW in the CX. Gene was one of only three stations I worked on 15M this time around.

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Lafayette HA-350 Receiver (Top) and Heathkit DX-40 (Bottom).

Gene writes:

On top of the DX-40 are a keying interface, TR switch and a homebrew VXO...

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Heathkit SB-102 (Top) and Ten Ten 544 (Bottom).

....The above pic shows a homebrew tuner for my doublet and a 1938 bug.

[Editor's Comments: There seems to be a growing aversion among hams to using an external tuner these days and any antenna that does not use coax. but a doublet with ladderline and external tuner are just a dirt simple, cheap, and unbeatable antenna system!]

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KG5IEE – Randall Marshall TX

Randall writes:

This year I used the Kenwood TS-511S, Kenwood TS-830S, and the Drake TR-4 for the Classic Exchange. This is one of my favorite events. Good excuse to get the vintage gear on the air with other vintage gear.

Some year I will have all my vintage rigs working at the same time, but this was not it. The missing unit on the top shelf is a Drake R4C that has the audio dropping out and becoming distorted even after recapping, and my Yaesu FTDX-560 would not give me a good bias reading. Looking forward to the next CX.



Top row: Drake T-4XC and TR-4. Bottom Row: Yaesu TS-511S and FTDX-560 and Kenwood TS-830S.

Note the key Randall is using on the right.

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This is a Czech Army RM-31. Randall says it has a very smooth, soft movement.

W6CJ – Jay Los Angeles CA

Jay writes:

This was my first CX. I enjoyed working CX with the Drake C-line; I've only owned them since Fall 2024. Renewed my respect for the "No BS" technology and operating styles of 50 years ago. A lot of QRM/N from neighbor's electronics; next CX I plan to connect a mag receive loop to my R4C and null out the QRN. The CX is real Amateur Radio: No waterfalls, screens, GPS, remote SDRs, spotting networks, phone apps, internet....etc.

This was special. It's my 50th year as a ham. My 1st rig was a HW16. I envied the Drake Twins back then, so now I own the Twins and have an HW-16.

73
DE W6CJ

[Editor's Comments: Hi Jay and welcome to the CX. Congrats on being licensed for half a century!]

N6KN Rocco

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Rancho Palos Verdes CA

Rocco writes:

SSB Portion: I started on 7220 with Ron, K2RP, John, K6KOI, and Dick, K6BZZ. We all traded QSO's back and forth, working through the tons of radios here and at Ron's house. I had a social event to attend in the afternoon, so that was it for Sunday. On Tuesday, K2RP and I continued our marathon boatanchor activity on 7212, and I qualified most of the rigs I had installed. I tried 20 meters in the afternoon, but conditions were not great. I did pick up Tom, W7TMD, with his nice sounding Swan 700 CX. I finally threw in the towel at 1750 to leave for a writing group meeting, and that was it.

CW Portion: There was more activity for the CW portion of CX this year. There was a DX contest, but it was on SSB, and left the bands fairly clear. I started on 40 early and picked up Mark, W7ESN, with his mighty Elmac AF-67 and other fine radios. Amazingly, I worked Ricky, KR7W, in ID with his HW7 with ease, and he was patient enough to work several of my installed stations here. Picked up CX regular Howie, WB2AWQ, with his GO9, John, WB8APR with his nice Swan 500 CX and also his Adventurer. Randy, WB4SPB, was strong on his Drake B Line and also his HW16. Then John K6KOI, broke in, and he was kind enough to sit through a pile of my novice transmitter stations plus more. Ron, K2RP, and Dick, K6BZZ, broke in, and we traded QSOs back and forth. The Globe VFO for my HG-303 failed, so I had to use a 7045 crystal on that. My HT-44 sounded like it was operating on raw AC at first, until I exercised the power plug at the back. In fact, several of the radios that are usually very reliable here failed at first due to dirty switch contacts and other electro-mechanical problems. Ron, K2RP, had very kindly given me his brother's old Vibroplex, and I refurbished it by bending back a few screws and posts, followed by copious amounts of DeOxit. I used it on the SR-400A, and it worked great. Thanks, Ron! and 73 to everyone who participated in this very unique and fun event!

Rocco N6KN

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Some photos of Rocco's Radios:



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VE7BGP - Gerry
Nanaimo BC

Gerry qualified his IC-751A, FT-897D in the CW event, and his IC-720A, IC-740, and IC-751A, and FT-101Z in the SSB event.

Gerry's entry is rather interesting in that many do not realize that the first generation hybrid and completely solid state transceivers are approaching, or have passed, being 50 years old!

I don't know when the first all solid state transceiver became available, but the IC-720A Gerry used is shown as having come out in the early to mid 1980s.

For hybrid radios, the TS-520 debuted in 1973 and the FT-101 came out in 1970!

I remember seeing the first advertisement for the TS-520 in QST when I was a Johnny Novice banging away with my B&W 5100B and SX-111.... and I was envious of that new radio! While those of us that participate in the CX are now very fond of our vintage radios, there was a time when many of us were eager to discard them for the latest offering in the radio world. I very much like my old WW 2 military radios I use and take on the road for display, but at the same time I really appreciate the new IC-7000 that I got in April of this year!

VE7CNF – Toby
Southern BC

Toby is a man after my own heart, as he like the “ARC-5” types of radios! He entered CW event with 4 stations and made a tidy 77 contacts!

For three of the stations he used his trusty Hammarlund HQ-129-X receiver. The different transmitters he used with the Hammarlund were an AN/ARC-5 T-19 transmitter on 80M, an SCR-274N BC-458A on 40M, and a Johnson Valiant 2. For his 4th CW station he used the Valiant 2 paired with a Hallicrafters SX-71 receiver.

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Left: HQ-129-X, T-19, BC-458A. Right: SX-71 (Top) Valiant 2 (Bottom)

W7DRA – Mike Seattle WA

Mike likes HW-16's as you can see from the following pictures.

Mike writes:

Lot of work getting my Heathkit DX-20 and Hallicrafters S-40 running; the S-40 had a bad power supply and I had to rewire the 6CL6 on the DX-20. I wanted to get my "Made in 1958 from a kit" Globe Chief 90A with an S-38/BC-453 on the air but that is for the next time. This is my 1st log sent in!

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40M Station: Heathkit DX-20 (Crystals only) and Hallicrafters S-40

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Left: 40M Station: HW-16/HG-10 VFO. Right: 80M Station HW-16/"ARC-5" VFO

**W7FOX– Fox
Tuscon AZ**

Fox writes:

Hello CXers,

The CX was lots of fun, but a few rigs didn't get used for lack of space and interconnections. Hay wiring rigs temporarily has led to RF getting into DDS VFOs causing wide signals and monitoring problems. My apologies.

Major projects here in the Old Pueblo include making more room for equipment

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operating positions. Having built a new garage a few years ago, I recently looked over the storage room in the back and noticed that the shelves could be converted to operating tables. After lots of blood sweat and tears, well maybe a little blood, now I have about 26 feet of new operating positions.



The next step is how to hook up all those rigs without a nightmare of cables and relays. I've tried vacuum tube antenna TR switches, Pin Diode switches, and vacuum relays which all work, but each has advantages and disadvantages. A vacuum tube TR switch is currently in use, but it doesn't address sequential keying and muting. Years ago I built a very successful Pin Diode switch, but I think lightning got into it and destroyed the very expensive diodes. After that came a vacuum relay with associated circuitry for proper time sequence keying. This is

currently in use, and gives very nice QSK on CW. However, the vacuum relay has a finite life and has been replaced once. The replacement is starting to stick in the

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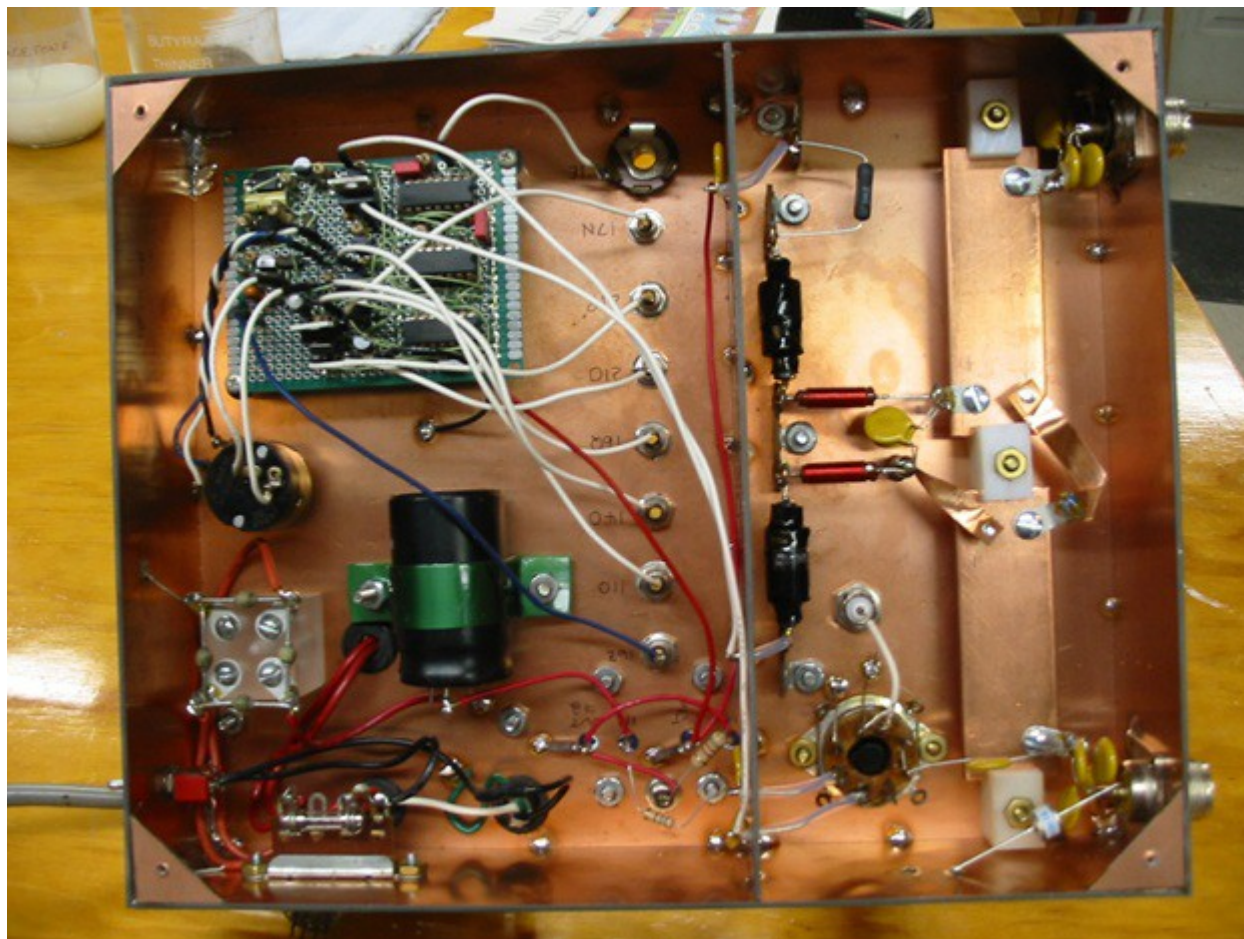
transmit position as the first one did. They are rated for a life so many millions of operations, but in CW service, it doesn't take long to reach a million. Having worked with Pin Diodes, they seem to be the better choice, so I am trying a combination of pin diodes switching the antenna to the transmitter, and mercury wetted relay switching the antenna to the receiver.



The mercury relay works, but it has some drawbacks. It isn't as fast as I'd hoped, switching takes several milliseconds, and the receiver is still getting a pretty big signal. I will rebuild the TR switches using all PIN diodes, and try to keep lightning out of it! Above is the TR switch, incorporating pin diodes to switch the antenna to the transmitter, and mercury relay to switch the antenna to the receiver.

The RCA jacks provide the proper sequence of cathode keying, grid block keying, muting, VFO keying, and side tone. The knob turns the side tone on and off, and adjusts the volume.

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In the above photo, the PIN diode switch is on the right, and will switch 400 watts on 160 meters, 800 watts on 80 meters, and the legal limit on 40 meters and above. The diodes are UM4006, which have a carrier lifetime of 5 microseconds which is a little marginal below 40 meters. UM2100 series diodes have a carrier lifetime of 25 microseconds and would be a better choice, but I already had these.

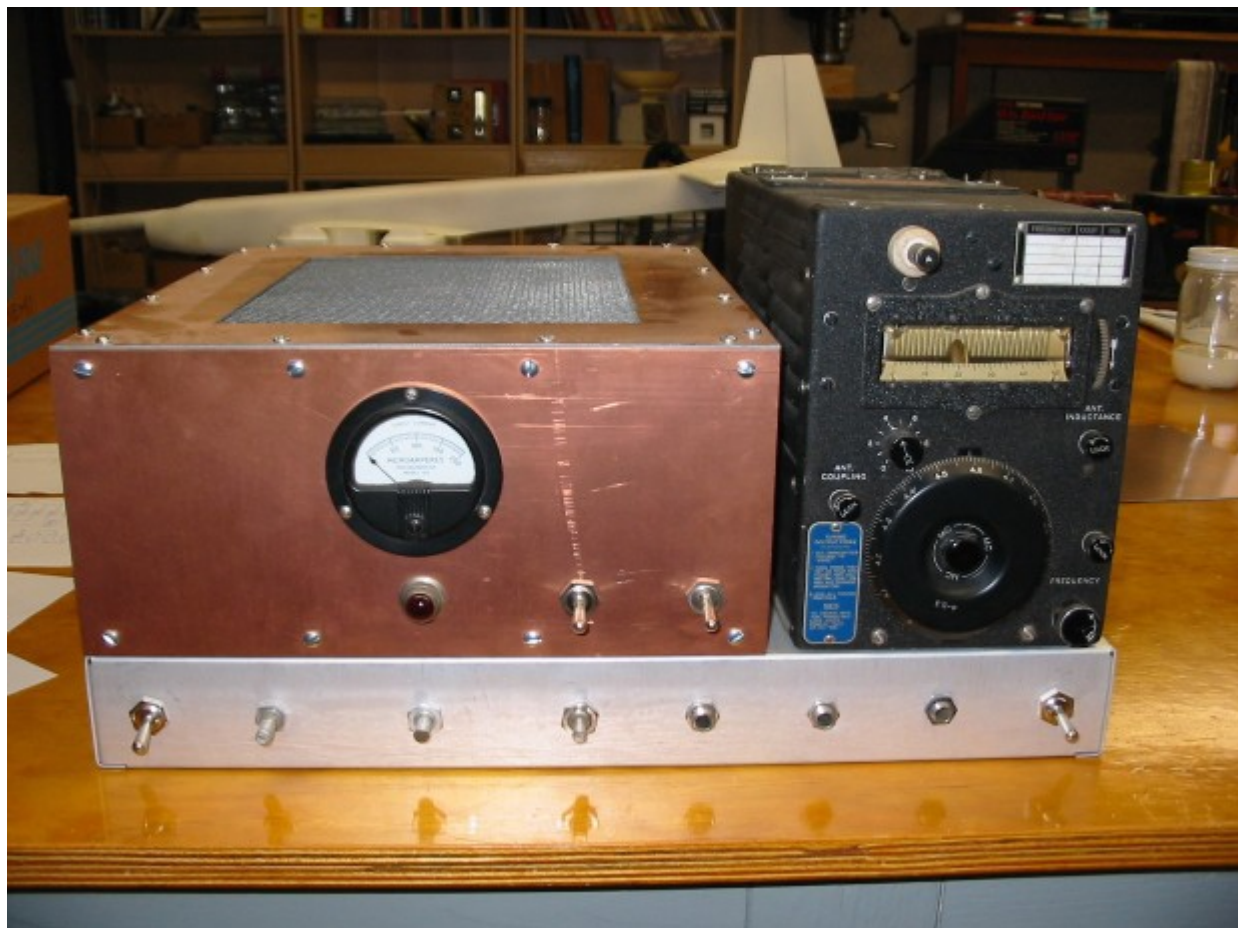
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My hope for this project was a "one size fits all" TR switch that could be hooked up to any pair of radios and instantly make them operate smooth QSK on CW. I didn't quite get there, but it does help to accommodate sequential switching, grid block keying, cathode keying, antenna switching, muting, and such.

The other current project, shown below, is this "docking station" for ARC-5 transmitters. I wanted a power supply, modulator, and TR switch that would work for unmodified as well as hacked-up veterans. The correct power plug in the back selects the right power and control scheme for whatever command set is mounted.

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VA7MM – Mark Coquitlam BC

Mark entered the CX with 4 stations:

TX: Heathkit DX-60+ HG-10B VFO, RX: Drake 2-C

TX: ARC 5 BC-459A, RX: HRO 5TA1

TX: AN/ARC-5 T-19, RX: HRO 5TA1

Transceiver: Yaesu FT-101ZD

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Left: Drake 2C, HG-10 / DX-60. Right: HRO (mid 40's vintage) and BC-459 (or T-19)



FT-101ZD

Mark writes:

Kudos to these operators whose signals caught my attention:

- Mike, W7DRA, on his HW16 and DX-20 that had an ear pleasing chirp
- Toby, VE7CNF, on his Valiant 2 that had a beautifully stable and strong

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signal

- Halden, VE7UTS, on his Signal One CX7A, a radio that I haven't heard for decades

The majority of my contacts were with stations west of the Rockies but I did make QSOs with K3MSB in PA , NV1Z in VT and JH1VIG in Japan.

Thanks to all those who contacted me and in particular Doc, W7OS, and Howie, WB2AWQ, who were able to offer several fine sounding gear combinations.

Finally thanks to Ron, K2RP, on his retirement for his years of service in support of Classic Exchange.

[Editor's Comments: another person that likes "ARC-5" type radios !!]

W7OS – Doc Tacoma WA

W7OS, a long time "CXer", is the Doctor Clifford J. Spike Memorial Museum. "CXer" is in quotes as regardless of who you work there, the operator is always Doc!

Doc writes:

We didn't manage to get ready in time for phone weekend, but it was fun to work some of the usual suspects on CW, and we got all of our planned radio sets on the air and qualified. It was especially cool to use some new-to-W7OS radios – our club has been the beneficiary of several collections donated by aging and SK ham estates during the last year. We have an SX-101A to go with the HT-32B, but that receiver needs work, so the trusty R4C took its place. We have an HT-37 to go with the SX-111, but we wanted to put the Hammarlund HX50A transmitter on the air – something you just don't hear every day – even though it was a bit whoopy and will need some maintenance before next time.

Here's are some of the very FB OM stations that the "Docs" put on the air:

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Collins 75A4 and Johnson Viking Valiant with Hallicrafters HA-1 Keyer in the middle.

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Hallicrafters HT-32B and Drake R-4C

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Hallicrafters SX-111 and Hammarlund HX-50A

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VE7UTS – Halden North Vancouver BC

Halden writes:

My HW-101s made their CX debut in Fall 2024. This time around, I used both on phone and only the one with the CW filter for CW. The HW-101s ran on an HP-23B power supply acquired at the Mike & Key hamfest the day before this CX began.

The CX7A came to me a few years ago missing some parts and with several electrical problems; I got it working after the Fall 2024 CX.

I've had the TS-830S for several years now; those familiar with this radio may note that its readout (see photo) now has 10 Hz resolution.



A Kenwood AT-230 tuner provided critical service this time around, managing multiple antennas and matching the 80/40m dipole for use on 10m and 15m.

A newly-installed old radio switch enabled faster radio swaps. I used the Radio Shack key I had used when I was 12 for some contacts, and a Nye Viking Master key for others.

This year's CX provided better propagation conditions and more variety in signal quality relative to prior CXs I experienced. Drift was greater than chirp in some signals, sometimes the other way around.

The coolest contact was with WL7BDK in Alaska; Rick was running only 1 watt on an HW8!

Editors Comments: Thanks for pointing out the 10 Hz resolution on the TS-830S. I knew there were modifications to do this, but your radio is the first one that I've seen that has it implemented!

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Left: HW-101 (Top) CX-7A (Bottom). Right: TS-830S / AT-230

KR7W – Ricky Ammon ID

Ricky writes:

Greeting CXers

Over the last 2-3 years I've developed a penchant for Green Heathkit Amateur Radio Products. So, for Sunday's CX, all of the radio pairs used are of the Heathkit green conviction. Sunday morning began on 40 meters using Heathkit's second worst amateur radio product (IMHO), the HW-7. Its direct conversion receiver and 1.8 Watt transmitter was able to facilitate me making 6 QSOs using a 40M NVIS fence dipole. The receiver has been rebuilt to not receive WWV, Shortwave, or local AM stations. It's still a Direct Conversion RX, but with RF and AF selectivity.

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A new to me and still under construction set of Heathkit Twins, HR-1680 and HX-1681 were used to make 9 more QSOs on 40 and 20 meters. Lastly, an all vacuum tube HW-101 was used to make 14 more QSOs until quitting time. Of these 3 Green radio pairs, the HW-101 is my favorite. Perhaps it's that Baby Boomer audiophile thing- where tube amps sound warmer and have that 'feel good' sound. Dunno, but the 101 was much more agreeable to listen to.



The entire Heathkit Green Team. L-R HX-1681 TX, HR-1680 RX; HW-7; SX-101

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HW-7 QRP Radio.

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Tuesday's CX theme was Radios of the '50s. Only 1 radio pair was used: WRL Globe Chief + VF-1 VFO TX and a Hallicrafters SX-101 Mk 3 RX. 22 QSOs were made.



1950's Gray Theme: Heathkit VF-1 VFO and WRL Globe Chief TX. RX is Hallicrafters SX-101 Mk 3.

I always look forward to making many QSOs with W8KGI Jim. Jim's Homebrew 6146 transmitter wins the Blue Ribbon Best Sounding Chirp award for me. Also, Jim's Collins 32RA transmitter wins the Most Unusual Sounding Signal Award - where the dit and dahs would sometimes change frequency within the same Morse character. It was very entertaining to listen to.

Even though W7ESN Mark used 7 different transmitters, some unusual, his Elmac AF-67 wins my Red Ribbon Second Best Chirp Award.

As long as I am inventing Awards... The Furthest Away DX QSO was with K3MSB's Green Radio DX-60B. ID to PA is a long way using compromised radios and antennas like I have. As always I'm looking forward to the Fall

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2025 CX. A big hand of dits and dahs goes out to K3MSB Mark for keeping the CX event alive.

73
KR7W Ricky
Idaho Falls, ID

**W8KGI – Jim
Sandia Park NM**

Jim once again was in the event with his usual plethora of radios:

CW:

Central Electronics 100V
Collins 32RA, 32V3, 32V3, 75A3, 75A4
Drake R4B, T4X
Elmac AF67
Hallicrafters HT20, SX28A, SX73
Hammarlund HQ129X
HB 6146 "VIV"
Heath DX100
Johnson Valiant, Viking 1
Knight T150A
National HRO, HRO50R1, HRO5TA1, NC101X, NC173, NC200, NC303
RME70

SSB:

Heath SB400
B&W 6100
Collins 75A3, KWM1
National NC303

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W8MND – Bill
Mesick MI

Bill writes:

This is a great vintage gear event and I enjoy it being two days that are spread out. I got to warm up the shack and exercise the McElroy straight key. All the chirps and wobbles sounded great and every RST I sent was a xx9

Editor's Comments: Wow! You're too nice Mike! I tell 'em like it is! On a related note (pun intended....) I've found that most non-CXers do not know the difference between a T8 and a T9C!]

I enjoyed a real rag chew with Ernie AA2YK. I was using my DX-40 and mentioned my Viking 2 was percolating and he said he would love to hear it So, after a quick dip we went at it some more, That was way more enjoyable than just exchanging basic information. Look forward to the next one, I'm a CW guy but hopefully we can get some phone activity.

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Bill's tidy and well appointed shack with the Viking ranger 2 on the left.

Top Deck: Heathkit DX-40 and HG-10 VFO.

Middle Deck: Drake R-4B and TR-4C.

Lower Deck: Drake T-4X and R-4.

For the CX, Mike used his Heathkit DX-40 and Viking Ranger 2 transmitters, Drake R4 receiver, and his mid 80's vintage Icom 751A transceiver.

K9VKY – Brian Fombell PA

Brian writes:

Hello Mark and the CX gang.

Another great time was had hearing our beloved radio relics on the air, meeting old friends, and some new ones as well. Thunderstorms and digital

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QRM failed to spoil the fun of returning to the thrilling days of yesteryear. (Am I the only one who has found digital stations to start up exactly on my crystal frequencies?).

It was a limited effort again for this CX, but I would like to especially thank Tim WA8VTD, Rob, K2WI, and John, K3MD (twice) for going above and beyond to copy my one watt wonder TNT oscillator. Also, a tip of the hat to Earl, K4BSK, for tuning significantly off his calling frequency to copy my crystal controlled spy radio transmitter. The ham spirit remains even in a high tech contest oriented ham radio world.

Here's hoping the gods of the ether will smile upon us for the Fall CX. In the mean time, happy hunting on the bands and keep those filaments glowing.

73 Brian K9VKY



Left: 1929 HB TNT TX Right: 1933 National FBX RX

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In addition to his TNT and FBX setups, Brian also used his Collins 32V2 and 75A2 as well as his PRC-1 spy radio set!



Brian and his PRC-1 from the Fall 2023 CX

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NZ0T – Bill Shell Knob MO

Bill writes:

I had a lot of fun working CW only with my newly restored Heathkit SB-102. It's actually an SB-101.5 because it had no LMO and I had trouble finding an SB-102 LMO. So I got a 101 LMO and installed it after rewiring the rig to accept the 101 tube type LMO instead of the transistor 102 LMO.



Yes, I used a DSP external audio filter because it has no CW filter. Thanks to all I worked!

73, Bill NZ0T

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