

Colorado QRP Club

The Low Down

Promoting QRP Since 1994

Club News...

CLUB DUES REDUCED !

With the move to publishing the Low Down as a Web document we will be saving a substantial amount from the club funds. The executives voted to reduce the club subscriptions to \$6 a year. Please check the CQC web site for complete details at www.cqc.org

CQC GARAGE SALE AND DONATIONS

Clean out the shack? Please consider donating your unused ham gear to the CQC club. All proceeds go to fund QRP activities. Item can be sent to CQC PO Box 17174. Golden CO 80402-6019.

Our next Regular meeting will take place
Saturday, January 15, 2005 at 10:00 am
Guest Speaker: AAØRS
David Wilson
Topic: Low Band Operating
Meeting Location: Offices of Milestone Technologies
10691 East Bethany Drive,
Suite 800



Marshall "Emmbo" N1FN searching a suspected "Teleband" site at Daniel's park.

CQC Picnic 2004

This year's annual picnic, at Daniels Park just southwest of Denver, was once again tons of fun! Highlights included a rare visit from founding member NFØZ (who now resides in Arizona), the left foot Morse sending contest, and perfect weather!

For the left foot Morse sending contest we utilized two judges this year, N1FN (Marshall) and KA3RDZ (John). Each contestant was given a whole 30 seconds (one half minute!) to practice sending with their weakest foot. Then, each was given the following message to be sent in their best possible "fist:" "OH SAY CAN YOU SEE WHY I USE SSB?"

Winner - Larry Feick (NFØZ), won this year's competition "hands" down! Larry was presented with a Home Depot gift certificate that was donated by KIØRB

Second Place - was split two ways between the even scores of Peter Inskeep (NO2D) and Jim Pope (KGØPP). Each were presented with a Chilli's Restaurant gift certificate donated by WBØJNR

Third Place - Roger Wendell (WBØJNR) was presented with a code oscillator kit that was donated by N1FN of Milestone Technologies

The new fall scheduling of our annual picnic worked out really well so we're looking forward to seeing you all in 2005!

For more information, visit our website at www.cqc.org

Issue 53 November/December 2004

Photo by Roger Wendell WBØJNR

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The Low Down

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Newsletter: Some articles in The Low Down are copyrighted. Written permission is required to reprint any article. Articles for The Low Down are encouraged. Articles must be submitted electronically in Word, Word Perfect or ASCII Text format. Email articles to LOWDOWN@CQC.ORG. Graphics or scanned photos should be in GIF, TIF, BMP or JPG format. Photos or graphics may be submitted to be scanned. Material submitted to the Low Down become the property of The Colorado QRP Club and cannot be returned. The Low Down is published bi-monthly in Feb., Apr., June, Aug., Oct. and Dec. The Low Down reserves all final decisions whether or not to publish submissions. The Colorado QRP Club does not warrant any item advertised, reviewed or described in this publication.

QRP Information Net: The Colorado QRP Club also meets on the air every Monday evening at 2000 local time on the 147.225 repeater serving the eastern slope of the Rockies from Cheyenne, WY, to Pueblo, CO, with linked repeaters in Boulder (145.46) and Colorado Springs (145.16). Backup frequency: 145.145. The Club's Denver metro simplex liaison frequency is 146.445.

Meeting Dates: 2004 Meetings: Jan. 10, Mar. 13, May 8, July 10, Sept. 11, Nov. 13 at a location to be determined. Annual Picnic: Sat. Sept 18, 2004. Annual Banquet: To Be Announced. Changes will be announced on the Monday evening Net and posted on the [WWW,CQC.ORG](http://WWW.CQC.ORG) website, if time permits.

Informal Monthly QRP Gatherings: Members meet informally at a local restaurant -- details on the web-site. **Annual Dues:** \$12.00. Join via the internet at WWW.CQC.ORG. Or, send dues and requests for membership applications to: CQC, POB 17174, Golden CO 80402-6019.

Internet: WWW.CQC.ORG. Information, membership, renewals, officers, activities, CQC Swap List and CQC-List subscriptions.

Correspondence: Editor, The Low Down POB 17174. Golden CO 80402-6019.

CQC Logo mugs are back

Don't leave your shack without it!! Vince, our club Secretary, arm-wrestled a half dozen vendors until we got a good deal on a few dozen of these beautiful, cobalt-blue coffee mugs. Get yours while supplies last!!



Photo courtesy Marshall Emm N1FN

\$10.00 (Pick one up at our meeting or other gathering)
 \$4.00 (Shipping and handling if we mail one to you...)
 Order from our web site using our PayPal secure service.

World Marine Altitude Record for Ham Radio

By Jake Groenhof - N0LX

August 14, 2004

This past summer I operated QRP from a small rowboat in a reservoir at 13,800 feet, just below the summit of Mt Evans west of Denver. It was a cool 45 degrees, but the sun was shining and I was fulfilling a plan that took two years to happen. I was packed and ready to go late last summer, but the day before it was to happen, they closed the road for the year due to snow.

Well, the contacts came in from as far away as New Hampshire and Virginia and I had a great time, especially hearing the surprise in their voices as they asked me to repeat my location. The hardest part was talking, rowing and logging at the same time. The wind came up frequently and I had to keep rowing to keep from being blown into the not-too-distant shore.

I brought along two friends: Bruce, KG0SH and Eric, KG0HO to help me carry the boat to the water and act as witnesses. They stayed with the vehicles back on the road and answered questions from curious passers-by. Several wanted to know how big the fish were that I needed such a big pole. (By the way, I did receive permission to do this from the USFS. There is no boating allowed on the two bigger lakes down below here.)

Here's the setup I used that day:

Boat: eight-foot Walker Bay

Rig: Yaesu FT-817 running five watts SSB on 17 and 20 meters

Tuner: homebrew tuned circuit using toroid coils and an old a.m. radio's tuning cap

Antenna: twenty-foot, coil-shortened, halfwave vertical, held up with a fiberglass fishing pole

In the spirit of fun and adventure with ham radio, I am claiming the Ham Radio Marine Altitude Record. If someone should come along and prove he operated from a lake at 16,000 feet in the Himalayas twenty years ago, then I'll congratulate him and revert to my secondary claim of the QRP Marine Altitude record. The most important thing of all is that I set a goal, succeeded and had a blast doing it!

72,
Jake
N0LX



Photos by Jake Groenhof - N0LX - copyright all rights reserved

For more information please visit Jake at: <http://hometown.aol.com/n0lx/hamradio.html>

2004 Christmas Key

Morse Express has released its 2004 Christmas Key, a gold-plated miniature camelback in the 19th century style.

The Morse Express Christmas Key is a fully operational miniature key, hand machined from solid brass and plated with 18 carat gold. It measures 2 9/16" by 1 5/16" at the base and weighs a surprising eight ounces.

According to Marshall Emm (N1FN) at Morse Express, the 2004 Christmas Key is a miniaturized replica of a 19th century camelback key. All of the usual adjustments (trunnion bearing tension, lever spring tension, and contact spacing) are available by means of gold plated screws with matching lock-nuts, and the indented knob is very comfortable to use. The camelback lever is a cantilever, with contacts at the rear of the key for enhanced leverage, increased mass, and more precision in operation. The lever spring adjustment is also a throwback to the 19th century, with an expansion spring held in place by a pin on the bottom of the key. The 2004 Christmas Key has not only the appearance, but also the distinctive feel of a true camelback.

The machining and assembly processes were done by hand. The result, according to Marshall, is "a beautiful little key that will make an excellent Christmas tree decoration or stocking stuffer, but is also very usable for sending code. It's one of the smallest practical keys we've ever seen, so it will be very handy for QRP portable operations. It will also add something special to Straight Key Night."

The base of each key is engraved with Morse Express's "Speedy Key" logo and "Christmas 2004." This is a limited edition of 250 keys, and each bears an engraved serial number on the base.

The 2004 Christmas Key is \$69.95, plus s/h, and is available only from Morse Express. Pictures and more information are available on the Morse Express web site at www.MorseX.com where you will also find secure ordering facilities.

Call (800)238-8205 toll free to order by phone, or (303) 752-3382 for more information.



Photo by Morse Express

THE SPORTS PAGE

By Roger Wendell - WB0JNR

Gabe Sellers (W2ZGB - CQC Member #12):
Gabe has really been on the move in his fight against Diabetes!

Gabe has jogged the equivalent of twice around the world's equator! Your humble webmaster, noting that his own waistline has been expanding lately, took keen interest in Gabe's story and how he controls his diabetes while staying in top physical condition on top of it (The Colorado QRP Club adds this common-sense disclaimer - don't undertake any strenuous activity or exercise without the guidance of your doctor!!):

Gabe started jogging for health reasons in February, 1979 at the age of 29 - a month after he discovered he had diabetes. Gabe said, "Jogging was something I had done before (once a week, weather permitting, if I felt like it). It was the exercise that gave the most bang for the buck (time put in). Jogging enough miles to circle the earth at the equator didn't become a goal, the first time or the second time, until the miles total got close first."

Gabe added, "The first diabetic that I ever knew of was myself. I didn't know anything about it. The first time I tried jogging, after I got diabetes, I had my first insulin reaction. My eyes dilated and I could barely see. I covered my eyes, walked back to my house, closed the curtains, put on dark glasses, and vowed never to jog again. I didn't understand what was happening. Eventually I figured it out. That was 49,830 miles ago."

When asked how he keeps track of the miles, Gabe says, "My first routes were along the streets. I was able to measure the length of the routes using my car's odometer. When my route started using Northglenn's Northwest Open Space, I measured the length of the route using my bike's odometer, which gave me numbers consistent with my car. I recorded the miles in my diabetes log along with my insulin doses and blood sugar measurements so I could see how they related. At the end of 1979 I wondered what I would get if I added up those miles numbers. Holy Mackerel! Since then, I totaled up the miles at the end of each month (for the month, for the current year, and since I got diabetes, are the numbers I record in my diabetes log)."

Gabe completed his first jog, equivalent to a trip around the Earth's equator, in 1993. Gabe says, "The mile numbers were low at first as it took me years to build up to 15 miles a run, what I do now." Gabe mentioned that he'll be cutting the mileage back to a "mere" 10 miles a run sometime soon. When asked about his overall health Gabe said, "I am disgustingly healthy. Heart disease is usually what ends up killing a diabetic because it damages the circulation. My first cholesterol measurement back in the 80's was 81. My diabetes doctor said my chances of having a heart attack were "zero". This year my cholesterol was measured at 128, with the HDL being 62 and the LDL being 57. These numbers are superb."

When your humble scribe asked Gabe what he'd like to add he said he'd like to show us a little fun with numbers. At 50,000 miles (what he'll have run by the end of September, 2004) times 100 calories per mile (for his body weight) equals 5 million calories burned jogging. 5 million calories divided by 3500 calories per pound of fat equals 1428 pounds of fat. Gabe said, "That is how much more I would weigh if I hadn't been jogging. Obviously, I also eat more than most people!"

Gabe is certainly an inspiration to not only the diabetes community, but "couch potatoes" like your club's webmaster! Gabe has been active with our club ever since it's first meeting back in 1994 in addition to maintaining a huge collection of TenTec QRP gear!

Keep on Truckin' Gabe!

Funny Noises

By Marshall Emm - N1FN

View Halloo!

As this is written (early November) one of the oldest sports in England is kicking off what may be its last season. Formal fox-hunting, aka The Hunt, is under increasing pressure from parliament and the public, and may well be banned forever. A tradition going back to the 17th century, the Hunt season with its rich tapestry of symbology and pageantry is one of the purest exercises in Privilege, one of the few left to the British upperclass, and that may well be why it is doomed.

In the QRP world we have our own Fox Hunt, now a glorious tradition that is ten years old. While we have adopted a few of the trappings of the English hunt (mostly terminology) we inhabit a perverse world where the Fox is a hero, and goes out of his way to get caught. The QRP 40M Winter Fox Hunt started on November 4th and there will be a hunt every Thursday evening through March 2005. Sponsored by the Colorado QRP Club, the Fox Hunts have helped more than a thousand hams improve their CW operating skills and provided tons of good clean fun. The details can be found on the official QRP Foxhunt web site at <http://www.qrpfoxhunt.org> but I'll hit the high spots here in the hope of persuading YOU to participate.

A Foxhunt appears to be very simple— one QRP station is designated “the Fox,” and all the other QRP stations are called “Hounds.” For two hours, the Fox calls CQ and all the Hounds try to work him. The exchange is simple, and the Hounds even know (within 10KHz) where the fox will be operating. Actually TWO hunts are conducted each Thursday evening, with two Foxes but only one set of Hounds. You are almost always able to work at least one of the Foxes easily, but given good operating skills, propagation, and a bit of luck you can bag both of them. At the end of the season there is great glory for the Hound who has worked the most Foxes, and for the Fox who has worked the most Hounds. But like the many political issues we have had to consider in recent months, it is not as simple as it looks. Last winter no individual Hound managed to work more than 38 of the 40 Foxes. Or to put it in QRP Foxhunt jargon, no Hound managed to bag more than 38 pelts.

At the beginning of a hunt there may be well over a hundred Hounds calling the Fox. That's where the operating skills come into play. Like a DXpedition, the Fox has to deal with a pileup, and the hounds have to figure out how to get through the pileup. At the beginning the fox will be working pretty quickly, sending fast and working split, often with an extended Q rate of two to three QSOs per minute. Later in the hunt it will slow down considerably, both in CW speed and competition, and split operation won't be necessary, so everybody has a chance no matter their code speed or experience.

The Fox Hunts demonstrate one of the fundamental rules of QRP if you can hear the Fox, you can work him! The exchange is simple when the Fox hears you, he'll send your callsign followed by his exchange, consisting of a signal report, his state, his name, and the amount of power he is using, e.g. N1FN 59 CO 5W BK to which you reply with signal report state (or province, or DX prefix), your name, and your power. At the end of each week the

Continued on page 9

The Doctor is Destinated

Questions & Answers for the New Ham.

Q. Is BPL really going to be the death of Ham Radio?

A. That's an excellent question, and a very complicated one, but the answer is NO. Few people understand BPL, and even fewer understand what the letters BPL stand for, namely Band Pass Lacking. Or is it Bad Power Line. Or maybe Big Power-company License.

No, actually it stands for Broadband over Power Lines, and the idea is to redress one of the great injustices of the Internet. All Internet connections one way or another are supplied by two of the biggest thieves in our entire society– the Phone Company and the Cable Company. Why shouldn't The Power Company get a share of the pie? Besides, it's the American Way– Freedom of Choice. The Federal Government feels that you should have THREE choices when it comes to who will rob you for “connectivity” and the letters “con” at the beginning of that word say it all.

Q. But anyhow, what does this have to with Ham Radio, and QRPness, of which the Doctor is one of the most leadingest experts in the world?

A. The goal of Ham Radio is to communicate, and the goal of QRPers is to communicate with as little radiated RF power as possible. All you have to do is turn on your computer and “connect” to the Internet, and you will be able to communicate without radiating any power at all! That's really hamming it up on the (broad)bands! But what about tradition? Relax– if you connect via BPL you can rest assured that your signals are being radiated just like the old days.

The Doctor enjoys answering readers' questions; the harder the better. Just write to him care of this publication, and enclose an SASE if you would like your question sent back to you.

73KPS till next time.



Editor's Corner

Vince Kumagai - KI0RB

The CQC Experience

I have never liked to write. I guess it's because I was never great in my English classes. I never felt like a writer but there are times that I like to tell stories. When that happens I can sit for a while and put together a piece of writing. This is one of those times. The story I want to tell here is what it's like to be an officer/volunteer in the Colorado QRP Club. Along with perusing a pastime in ham radio I am also a licensed private pilot. It is very similar to studying for a FCC license. When you get your Private Pilot's license you will be told that it is a "license to learn". It is quite the same with your Ham radio license. Once you get your radio ticket you can hang it on the wall and play radio. What happens afterwards is up to you. Being a CQC officer is a great way to continue to learn. I started my service to CQC by operating as a 2-meter Net controller. As a newbie to Ham radio I was nervous my first time out but I stuck the script I was provided and started adlibbing as I went along. I was then approached to be the Contest Coordinator which I took on and found it to be easier than I thought. I held the position of Vice President for a while till I was promoted to President when Al Dawkins, K0FRP, had to take a job in South Carolina and was unable to continue as the elected President. I am currently the Secretary as of the last election and also the Editor of the Low Down. So how has it been? Truthfully, it's had its moments but over all it has been very rewarding. I do not operate on any regular schedule but I do get on the air to see what's going on. The job does not require being the ultimate operator. It has caused me to explore different facets of Ham radio and has pushed me to try different things. Here are the qualifications for being a CQC volunteer.

- Enjoys operating both at home and afield
- Enjoys going to Hamfests and Meetings
- Enjoys homebrewing and electronics
- Likes to share ideas and stories
- Can organize
- Can use a computer

Well that wasn't so hard. Are these qualities that you have? If so I ask you to consider a position in the club. Well you say you not in the Denver area? I'm not so sure you have to be. There are some positions that can be done remote with the power of the Internet. For instance the Contest Coordinator can be done remote. The Low Down is always on the look out for articles and pictures from our members. The club exists as a way to share ideas and information. We like to hear from our membership on what they have been up to. "What's been happening in your QRP shack" is the lead in to the general check in on the 2-meter Net every Monday night. Please share with the club your ideas and experiences. Consider a volunteer position or submit an article for the Low Down. Here's where you start – for volunteer information mail to – info@cqc.org. For submitting your articles and pictures – lowdown@cqc.org.

The Colorado QRP Club – “Ampping up your Ham radio experience”

Funny noises...

“results” are tallied and the web site is updated to show how many Hounds each Fox worked, and how many Foxes each Hound has worked, progressively through the season (20 weeks).

There are lots of ways to work on developing your skills, even if you discover fairly early that you are not going to be at the head of the pack. For example, you can concentrate on trying to work each Fox as quickly as possible. That means studying how the Fox is operating, figuring out where and when he is listening, and timing your call exactly right to get through the pile. Just like the skill and effort you have to expend to catch that rare DX!

Hounds can also organize themselves into four member Teams, and the teams compete with each other for a perpetual trophy.

It's fun, it's educational, it's “Must Give up TV.”

The QRP Foxhunt was started 10 years ago by Chuck Adams, K7QO, with the specific intention of getting guys off their computers and onto 40M on a weekday evening. It's evolved into a traditional winter activity for hundreds of QRPers. And beginning about four years ago, there's also a 20M Hunt in the summer. CQC had long sponsored the QRP Foxhunt by providing web space, and following the demise of QRP-L, The Internet QRP Club (the current QRP-L is just a mail reflector), CQC took on full sponsorship of the event.

You don't HAVE to be running QRP to participate, just to have your score counted. So if it seems like too much of a challenge at first, go ahead and make a couple Fox QSO's with whatever amount of power you need, but it's almost guaranteed that you will quickly discover how effective 5W can be.

Again, rules, schedule, tutorial, and more can be found at <http://www.qrpfoxhunt.org>. Hope to see you in the Fox Hunt!

CQC TOP TEN...

Popular Programs for Radio Club Meetings.

10. Coulombs and Farads.
What the Heck is the Difference?
 9. A new Color Code for Resistors.
 8. Laser Printers, How do they Work?
 7. Let's Build a Telephone!
 6. Reports from Officers
 5. Old Business, New Business
 4. What the ARRL means to You
 3. A Picnic!
 2. How to Communicate Using Broadband
- And the Number 1 way to achieve Pure QRP
1. Two words-- Corn Husking
-



John KA3RDZ and Marshall N1FN with the new QRP Dummy Load kits



Roger WB0JNR sending, KA3RDZ and N1FN scoring, Larry NF0Z - Athletic Trainer

Additional photos at

Photos by Roger Wendell WB0JNR
Additional photos at <http://www.cqc.org/gallery/picnic04/index.htm>

Colorado QRP Club



The Shelter at Daniel's Park

The Low Down



The new QRP Pocket key