

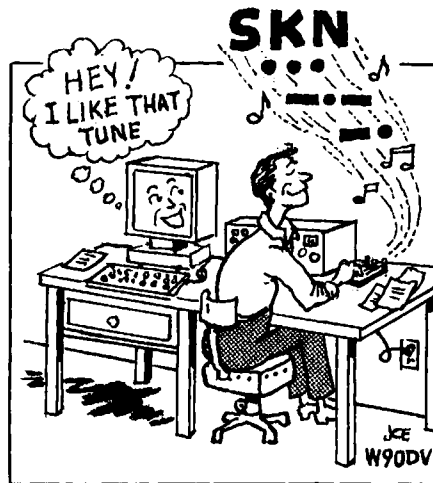
By Bev Fernandez, N1NAV

# Straight Key Night 1997

## All Hail That Glorious Mode

All hail that glorious mode,  
That calls all brothers around the globe.  
Creating the same cerebral itch,  
Making fingers jerk and twitch,  
And the bottoms of bands explode.  
Tonight it's not that frantic fray,  
They hear from day to day.  
It's New Year's Eve  
A slower pace does bode, my friend,  
Another chance to pound the brass  
And trip the light fantastic  
Tis the eve of SKN!

—Hunt Turner, KØHT



**T**he wonderful sound of “raw,” hand-sent Morse was again heard during Straight Key Night 1997. The straight key rhythm has a sound like no other. It is music to so many ears, and this year was no exception.

These days, when so much of the old is tossed aside, it is wonderful to hear the sounds of vintage equipment coming through the ether. Not only did folks dig through their junk boxes and dusty old storage shelves to find their trusty old straight keys, many of them found old boatanchor rigs and put them on the air for nostalgia's sake. It takes us back to a more relaxed era when people took the time to get to know each other. New friendships are started and old ones are rekindled. Dan, AE4AI, said, “There wasn't time to worry about going out on New Year's Eve, all the social activity was available on the ham bands. I had a great time.” John, WØAP, stated, “It was nice to hear human hands on the airwaves rather than the monotonous clatter of machine-sent code.”

In the 1997 SKN, we had 119 entries that added up to 1288 contacts. That translates to almost 11 straight key contacts per person. N5BF thinks that pounding away on your straight key is a good way to drum up business for the orthopedic doctors. The most-completed QSO award goes to Wayne, N2FX, for

pounding out 48 straight key QSOs. Michael, W2GR, was a close second with 43 contacts, and Doug, AB5YY, made 35.

Each year we ask the participants to vote for the best fist and most interesting QSO. When the votes for best fist were tallied, we had a three-way tie: Leland, W5KL; Robert, W3KW; and Joseph, K7CI. For the most interesting QSO there was a five-way tie: Puck, W4PM; Wayne, N1LZY; Leland, W4YE; Sam, K5SW; and Brice, W9PNE. Congratulations to all.

## Key Clicks

This was my first SKN, and it was lots of fun (NØBZM). There seemed to be good participation in this year's SKN (NMØL). It was great to see all the activity. SKN is a very enjoyable time and I always look forward to it (N1WL). There was lots of activity this year. Maybe the straight key will replace the keyboard and keyers at this rate (KØLWV). This was my third year participating in SKN and I really enjoyed it. I started on 160 meters and never left this amazing band (W4QBE). The number of boatanchors on the air is increasing, and so is the age of the operators (K9VKY). I would like to express my gratitude to you for sponsoring SKN. I can't think of any better way to start off the New Year. The

only way SKN could be better is to have two of them each year (NT8X). This year's SKN was very enjoyable. I'm already looking forward to next year (WB8CFO). As usual a very worthwhile event. It should be kept alive because us OTs are getting fewer and fewer (W1YJ). This year's SKN was again a terrific success. It is amazing how this activity has attracted so many each year (W4YE). SKN is a nice mixture of nostalgia, relaxed operating, and the camaraderie of Morse (K1FP). Some great friendships are renewed or made during this party (W5KL). I am a new ham and I joined in on the fun of SKN this year. I received my Technician Plus ticket in August and upgraded to General in October. I'm a 19-year-old YL and enjoy ham radio very much. I have met so many nice people (KC7YVK). Another good SKN. No parties and no big hangover this year (W9ZEN). SKN has become a regular part of my New Year's holiday, and as expected it was a lot of fun (WB2AWQ). Once again the best night in ham radio has come and gone. I would like to add my thanks to the ARRL for sponsoring this event (AB5YY). I had a great time. Lots of nice people with very good fists. This year was more of a challenge for me since I used a 5-W QRP rig, but I found folks to be very patient and tolerant of my weak signal (N9EXY). SKN on 80 meters during New Year's Eve is a magical happening unmatched anywhere else in ham radio (NN7A). Well, my first SKN has come and gone. What a workout! You didn't tell me it would be this tough (W8EQA). What better way to greet the New Year than with old friends and manual Morse on SKN (W7HB). I had a great time and am ready for more (K3KEL)! There were friendly warm greetings from folks from Canada to Panama (K4MR). SKN has proven to be the premier event of the year (N1CSD). Thanks for another great SKN. Of all the events that the ARRL sponsors, SKN remains my favorite (W4TVI). I sure enjoyed SKN this year. We should have more events like this. This is communication in its purest form (AA1KF).

QST