

2020 Straight Key Night Results

ARRL's classic New Year's Day event brought together 186 hams from all over the world.

Paul Bourque, N1SFE

ARRL Contest Program Manager

Every year on January 1, the shacks of many amateur radio operators are filled with the sounds of Morse code and the warmth of old tube gear, as Straight Key Night (SKN) takes to the air. During the first 24 hours of the new year, 186 participants made over 1,250 contacts.

Soapbox Comments

Straight Key Night can bring old friends together on the air, as well as foster new friendships. Many participants shared their stories on the ARRL Soapbox page (www.arrl.org/soapbox).



Barry Pfeil, K6RM, participated in his first Straight Key Night using vintage gear. He assembled his dream station from his high school days — a Drake 2B receiver that he restored and a Johnson Viking Ranger. [Barry Pfeil, K6RM, photo]

George Kelly, K9WWT, reported that he had a roundtable contact with three Navy buddies of 54 years. George, Carl Young, K5HK, and Robert "Brad" Bradley, AA7CT, all served as cryptographic technicians at the same base in Panama in 1966. Buddy Smith, W4YE, had a lengthy contact with two other hams from Fairfax, Virginia. They all went to the same high school and met on the air by accident.

Other participants reported bringing old gear back to life for the event. Paul

Harden, NA5N, operated low power using a World War II-era Navy J-38 key that his father had used as a Navy radioman during the Battle of Peleliu Island.

Gary Hornbuckle, K9MMS, participated in SKN for the first time this year. Gary said that he operated using mostly CW for the past 62 years, and for SKN he enjoyed using a Skillman brass straight key that he purchased from the original RadioShack store in 1958, as well as a 1959 Vibroplex Original Bug key that he'd received as a gift for his 16th birthday.

Jim Cluett, W1PID, had a contact with 97-year-old Don Gagne, W2LID, who has been an amateur for over 81 years! Don was originally licensed with that distinctive call sign in 1937, at the age of 15.

Brennan Price, N4QX, combined SKN with AMSAT CW Activity Day, using a straight key on multiple linear satellites. He reported hearing most of the activity on the CAS-4A and CAS-4B satellites, which passed over North America in the early and final hours of the event. His contact with Scott Richardson, N1AIA, was Scott's first CW contact via satellite.

Jim Zimmerman, N6KZ, contacted Dale Romagnoli, VE7YTB, who was operating maritime mobile on the tugboat *Seahorse* off the coast of British Columbia, Canada. It was Dale's first CW contact.

Best Fist and Most Interesting QSO

Each year, we ask SKN participants to cast their votes for "Best Fist" and "Most Interesting QSO." This year's vote for "Best Fist" is a three-way tie between Tom Billings, AA4TB; Tom Warren, K3TW, and Jim Zimmerman, N6KZ. "Most Interesting QSO" went to Billy Williamson, WB8SJE.

ARRL will hold the next Straight Key Night on January 1, 2021. Remember, you don't have to wait a year to enjoy hand-sent CW. Let's keep the airwaves filled with the sounds of dits and dahs until then!

Participating Stations

AA0QZ, AA4AI, AA4TB, AA7FV, AA8UU, AB8FJ, AB9BZ, AD0KH, AD4E, AE3A, AE7CG, AE8EA, AF3I, AF4O, K0PHP, K0PK, K1APJ, K1EEE, K1LEE, K2AL, K2NPN, K3AFS, K3BVQ, K3KKA, K3MD, K3NP, K3STX, K3SWZ, K3TW, K4DS, K4HJN, K4PMT, K5HK, K5KHK, K5LDA, K5MBA, K5SOH, K5TSK, K6DF, K6GPB, K6KQV, K6LG, K6PBQ, K6RM, K6SK, K6TY, K7COM, K7SU, K7TRF, K7ZX, K7ZY, K8JV, K8NB, K8RAT, K9DJT, K9LA, K9MMS, K9PMV, K9UQN, K9VKY, K9WWT, K9YA, KA0LDG, KA3BPN, KA4WJB, KA8NNY, KB2MN, KB8M, KB8TL, KB8TXZ, KB9STR, KC0PLZ, KC2KWA, KD0GRS, KD0WW, KD2BD, KD6WKY, KE0TT, KE1R, KE7LOY, KF8KS, KG4KG, KH4GX, KI0G, KJ6CA, KN4QDE, KN5L, KN7NNN, KO8S, KT3A, KW4RM, KW6G, N0EAX, N0IMJ, N0YB, N2KZ, N3HCN, N4CU, N4QR, N4QX, N4RLI, N5PBP, N6KZ, N8GAS, N8JLM, N8LA, N9BOR, NA5N, NC6Q, NF1O, NF8M, NI0R, NN7A, NO0V, NW0M, NW3V, W0CZ, W0EJO, W0ESE, W0KIZ, W1AST, W1MJ, W1PDI, W1PID, W1RO, W1TPB, W1TS, W1UJ, W2AAB, W2LID, W2NTN, W2QJH, W4IT, W4KDK, W4RK, W4SGP, W4SQ, W4YE, W5NZ, W5QLF, W6JHQ, W6KN, W7AIT, W7OS, W7UUU, W8DPK, W8WTS, W8WZ, W9KMP, W9XW, WA0JLY, WA0VQY, WA1CFX, WA2CHV, WA2SON, WA3GYN, WA4KFZ, WA4ONV, WA5KBH, WA6ARA, WA6BXV, WA7AXT, WA7OET, WA9PWP, WA9ZBW, WB0B, WB0CJB, WB0CNK, WB0IXI, WB2AWQ, WB3CEG/5, WB3JKQ, WB4YDL, WB6AAJ, WB8CFO, WB8SJE, WB9AYW, WB9HFK, WB9TFF, WD6EGW, and WD8RIF.

DX and VE stations included HP1AC, HP1IBF, VE3CBK, VK6GX, and VO1NA.