

ARRL Straight Key Night 2010

“Listen to them, what sweet music they sing.”

Dan Henderson, N1ND
ARRL Regulatory Information Manager

One of the great memories of growing up was watching Bela Lugosi in the original *Dracula* movie. The Count and poor Jonathan Harker have just heard the baying of the wolves. “The Children of the night...Listen to them, what sweet music they sing,” the notorious vampire softly says to his prey.

You have to go long and far to find another movie quote that would better describe the glorious melodies of dits and dahs careening around the ether during ARRL Straight Key Night (SKN). For a too brief 24 hour period, many are transported back to the days of their own youth. Rather than trying to become modern-day Nosferatu, these “Children of the Night” are also “Children of the Day — sharing their love and skill of pound brass to the next generation. These operators are bridges, not just to our past, but to our future as well.

Straight Key History

Straight Key Night goes back 40 years to 1970 and was the brainchild of Harvey Savage, K4MD according to the first SKN write-up that appeared in the March 1971 issue of *QST*. That first SKN saw 158 participation reports received reflecting 664 participants.

While having gone through some evolution (such as seeing participants use it as a time for also putting older equipment back on-the-air or some participants using hand operated “bugs” as part of the fun), the basic premise of SKN really hasn’t deviated from its beginnings. The purpose was simple: Get on the air and have some fun! One suspects ol’ Harvey would recognize the “music” being “sung” by the keys of the 240 operators who submitted an SKN entry in 2010. A total of 53 states, territories, provinces and even a couple of DXCC entities are represented in this year’s event. Participants reported over 2000 contacts, a slight increase from 2009.

The numbers alone do not tell the story of ARRL Straight Key Night. There is no way to quantify the quality of the contacts from that evening. About the closest you can come is to peruse the 70+ entries in the ARRL online soapbox for the event (www.arrl.org/contests/soapbox). There the participants,



RICHARD DILLMAN, W6AWO

Denise, K16BBR, spent a lot of her working career as a commercial CW operator at NMC and KPH. She had quite a time as one of the operators of the K6KPH operation.

Participation by State, Province and Country

State	Entries	State	Entries	State	Entries
AL	1	MA	6	OH	8
AR	3	MD	4	OK	3
AZ	9	ME	2	ON	2
BC	1	MI	7	ON1	1
CA	25	MN	3	OR	2
CO	2	MO	7	PA	13
CT	2	MS	1	PR	1
DL	1	MT	1	QC	1
FL	9	NC	4	RI	3
GA	5	ND	1	SC	1
HI	1	NE	1	TN	3
HP	2	NH	5	TX	31
IA	3	NJ	5	UT	2
ID	2	NL	1	VA	6
IL	11	NM	2	VI	1
IN	7	NV	3	WA	9
KS	4	NY	8	WV	2
LA	1				

in their own words and picture, tell the story of the magic of their 24 hours of operation. There you will find the chronology (and often photos) of their J-38s and McElroys; their Tillotsons and Nyes; their homebrew adventures and relics from their treasures. There you will also find the inventories of the radios — as well as of their memories of how they make music and magic.

Great Fists and Terrific Chats

To those who are SKN “regulars,” one of the great joys is hearing the music created a distinctive fist that you remember. Each year, participants are asked to nominate candidates for “Best Fist.” This year, their peers nominated 121 different calls as “Best Fist.” Two stations — Carl, K5HK, and the operators at

Maritime Radio Historical Society, K6KPH — received three votes. Congratulations to these great operators for bringing smiles to many faces.

It is not just about how good the wolves howl, on SKN a lot depends on what they are howling. Therefore, each year we invite participants to nominate their Most Interesting QSO. One hundred nine stations received nods for Most Interesting QSO consideration, of which five were tied with two votes each: Frank, AC9T; Willie, N4XE; Gary, N7HTS; Harold, KBØROB, and Richard, WA5CAV. The content of those contacts we will never know — just that they held the listener captive with a mystic quality.

ARRL Straight Key Night is unique that it can mesh the enchantment of the past with the wonders of the present — all the while keeping an eye on the future. Hand keys and vintage radios may evoke the past, but they also give today’s amateur avenues to explore. The music that is sung plays well at night, during the day, or any time it is heard calling to those who listen. Perhaps New Year’s Day 2011 will find a new crop of children singing the sweet melodies of dits and dahs...

Logs Received —

2010 ARRL Straight Key Night

AA4ZS, AA5TB, AA7IR, AA0QZ, AB5XZ, AB8FJ, AE3A, AE3J, AE4MZ, AF4MY, DL5CL, HP1AC, HP1BF, K1AC, K1DW, K1LNL, K1NIT, K1NV, K1PDY, K1VV, K2GBH, K2KEY, K2NPN, K3BVQ, K3MD, K3PX, K3ROI, K3RSA, K3Y/1, K4AXF, K4BAI, K4BKD, K4HGX, K4IV, K4JK, K4JYS, K4TMN, K4TP, K4TRH, K4UJK, K5BZH, K5DCM, K5HK, K5KV/5, K5SOH, K5TUC, K5ZOL, K6CSL, K6FFY, K6FWT, K6GPB, K6KQV, K6LG, K6PBQ, K7DJO, K7ING, K7NTW, K7ZYV, K8JD, K8JV, K8RJJ, K8UC, K9AYB, K9ING, K9LA, K9PFA, K9SB, K9VKY, K9WWT, K9YA, KA1BQP, KA1SC, KA3LOC, KA4JQZ, KA6ROD, KA7T, KA8NNY, KA9I, KA0I, KB1YJ, KB3AA, KB3VR, KB8PGW, KB8TXZ, KB9KEG, KC8UR, KD2JC, KD4ICT, KD5KJ, KD5MM, KD6HTN, KD6WKY, KE7DX, KE7LOY, KE8LF, KE0G, KF4IZE, KG6TH, KH6W/3GW, KH6OU, KK5FX, KK5NA, KN7T, KO4OP, KO6YG, K0CJD, K0CY, K0LWV, KP2YL, KT3A, KT0M, KW6G, N1CC, N1EP, N1II, N2BE, N2KZ, N3CJM, N3NZ, N4AFV, N4XE, N5BF/6, N5DY, N5KEV, N5LH, N5LUL, N5PHT, N5VI, N5XGG, N6TCZ, N7KRT, N7RVD, N8GU, N8KC, N9AKF, N9BOR, N9NM, ND2T, NF8M, NG1I, NG2T, NG7Z, NM0L, NN0B, NO5W, N0NB, N0ON, N0SS, NP3CW, NQ4Q, ON6ZJ, VA2NB, VA3RKM, VE3FRX, VE7NI, VO1NA, W1IVB, W1QH, W1RO/7, W1TPB, W1TS, W1VR, W2EQ, W2LG, W2LID, W2QJH, W2RJJ, W3GK, W4RK, W4STX, W4UR, W4YE, W4YOK, W5JBV, W5QLF, W5VSI, W5XV, W6IEE, W6JHQ, W6PAP, W6TUR, W6VNR, W7AIT, W7FF, W7GVE, W7LNG, W7UJY, W8FDV, W8WTS, W9JK, W9KMP, W9YO, WA1ABI, WA2DWT, WA2QQF, WA4NKL, WA4ONV, WA5ETK, WA5MUF, WA5OLT, WA5ZKO, WA6BXV, WA6RZ, WA7GSN, WA7LNC, WA7OET, WA7YZ, WA8TOX, WA9CFK, WA9QWX, WA9ZJ, WA0VY, WB1EDI, WB3CQD, WB5JWI, WB5LRP, WB5NMZ, WB6SCA, WB8LZG, WB8SIW, WB9HFK, WB0B, WB0CJB, WB0CNK, WB0ZWW, WD5ABC, WD5FOI, WD5IYT, WD8RIF, WD9EVK, WE2XGR/3, WN4KPG, W0ESE, W0FBI/7, W0TF, WR9H, WU7R, WW3QB, ZS2BK

