

Straight Key Night 2008 – Not Your Average Operating Event

Brass pounding in a New Year.

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After reading the 130 online Soapbox entries for ARRL Straight Key Night 2007, I don't know what the most impressive thing about the operating event would be. A total of 1950 contacts were reported in the 237 participant reports received. While those numbers are down from last year, I think that is purely an indication of the demands placed on amateurs at this time of year rather than a lack of interest in our Amateur Radio heritage.

SKN really has become an annual "tip of the cap" to the wonderful history and heritage of our hobby and service. The Soapbox underscores the *passion so many hold for their roots in the hobby*. Time and again the posters speak of their Elmers, first keys, vintage radios and the memories this 24 hour operating event brings to them. Whether making a single QSO to celebrate the event or pounding the brass for hours on end, SKN is a tribute to the nostalgia we all hold dear.

But the participants don't wistfully long for the "Days of Future Passed" (thanks to the Moody Blues for the powerful image that album title evokes). Alongside the Heathkit HW-16s (now fewer than six entries noted using that vintage rig) and Viking Challengers you will find participants just as likely to be using a radio complete with all the gadgets.

The allure of this event more and more becomes the blending of past with present, vintage keys to vintage (or modern) gear. Whether you are brand new to the hobby or have been around since Hiram himself was lighting up the ether, one contact on SKN and I suspect you are transported to a sense of appreciation for Amateur Radio as a hobby and the sense of enjoyment it can have in that capacity.

A total of 43 states as well as several Canadian provinces/territories and several DXCC entities (Panama, Puerto Rico, Finland, Belgium and Iraq) were represented in SKN 2008, with Texas leading the way with 22 stations on the air, followed by California with 19.

Participants by State, Province and Country

State	Entries	State	Entries	State	Entries
AK	1	MA	6	OK	2
AL	1	MD	2	ON*	3
AR	2	MI	6	ON6**	1
AZ	7	MN	9	OR	3
BC*	1	MO	10	PA	10
CA	19	MS	1	PR	2
CO	3	NC	4	RI	2
CT	4	ND	2	SC	3
FL	12	NH	3	TN	1
GA	2	NJ	8	TX	22
HP**	1	NL*	1	UT	2
IA	4	NM	4	VA	5
ID	2	NV	7	WA	1
IL	11	NY	15	WI	6
IN	3	OH	13	WV	1
KS	4	OH3**	1	YI**	1
KY	1				

*Province **Country

SKN has taken on almost "cult" status in some circles. For example, each year the Clifford J "Doc Spike" Antique Radio Museum station, W7OS, participates in Straight Key Night. After a year of remodeling their museum, the Tacoma Radio Club used SKN 2008 as the kick-off event to celebrate their accomplishment. The W7OS Museum is part of the Radio Club of Tacoma, which had 33 members participate in their "Potluck and Brass Pounding" event. All of their contacts for SKN were made using vintage equipment at the museum. Be sure to see their (and other) postings to the SKN online Soapbox at www.arrl.org/contests/results as well as visiting their club Web site at www.w7dk.org

Taking pride in your fist and the content of your QSO has always been at the heart of SKN. Every year participants are asked to include in their submission their vote for Best Fist as well as Most Interesting QSO. While nine stations received multiple votes for Best Fist, Gerald, WA6BXV, had three votes to take that honor. Bob, W5XW, and Brian, K9VKY, both received three votes for Most Interesting QSO. Congratulations to each of these fine operators, and all of the participants in this special 24 hours of Amateur Radio enjoyment.

There are some that look at SKN as an enigma — is *that* mode of communication

still around? Some see it as chance to reconnect with special memories. Some cherish the annual meeting with old friends, while still others give it a try to see what all of the hubbub is about. Yes, ARRL Straight Key Night has many faces and takes many shapes over the years. But one thing is for certain — you will be hard pressed to find anything in the hobby that brings out the spirit of *fun* to the participants more than this annual operating event. SKN will, as always, run next year from 0000 through 2359 UTC on New Year's Day 2009. I hope you can make the time to at least tune the bands and experience what has become a unique annual event. Who knows, you may just muster up the courage to pound a little brass yourself. Good luck and 73.

SKN 2008 Participants

AA4TB, AA4ZS, AA6E, AB8FJ, AB9NZ, AB0OX, AD5WI, AE3A, AE4MZ, AF2Z, AG1P, AH6EZ/W9, AI7H, HP1AC, K1DC, K1FPV, K1LNL, K1NV, K1PDY, K2GBH, K2JYV, K2KEY, K2NPN, K2UY, K3BVQ, K3MD, K3PX, K4CNW, K4HGX, K4JK, K4JYS, K4REB, K4TP, K4TRH, K4UK, K5BZH, K5EWJ, K5ICW, K5OPB, K5PAX, K5SOH, K6FFY, K6PBQ, K7AO, K7BIY, K7XC, K7ZYV, K8NB, K8WIV, K9CGD, K9HQ, K9LCK, K9VKY, K9WWT, K9YA (N9BOR, op), K9YKL, KA2BSK, KA3LOC, KA4PNE/M, KA4WJB, KA7T, KA8NNY, KA0I, KB2ADB, KB2KDV, KB2QIU, KB5BZH, KB8TXZ, KB9BVN, KB9EK, KC2EGL, KC2LMX, KC9ECI, KC0DSX, KD6WKY, KD8BBK, KE0G, KE4KY, KE0N, KF1J, KH6OU/4, K16FEN, K10G, KJ6CA, KK5FX, KK6MC, KL1WE/6, KL8DX, KN4SA, KO4OP, KO6YG, K0AQO, K0KWW, KP4DJ, KR7RK, N2BE, N2KZ, N2UC, N3JJT, N3MVX, N4FPW, N5KEV, N5LH, N5LUL, N5PHT, N5VI, N7KRT, N7VF, N8CX, N8GM, N8GU, N8KC, N8XMS, NG2T, NJ3K, NM0L, NM0L, NN8B, NO5W, N0EID, N0EVH, N0JL, N0NB, N0SS, NP3CW, NQ4Q, NU7T, NY00, OH3WD, ON6ZJ, VA3RKM, VE3LC, VE3WMB, VE7NI, V01NA, W1AW, W1DUW, W1EJ, W10H, W1PID, W1RO, W1TLZ, W1TPB, W1TS, W2GIW, W2IQK, W2LG, W2LID, W2LQ, W2RJJ, W2RS, W2WSC, W3CEI, W3TZW, W4ARM, W4BK1, W4DEC, W4RK, W4YD, W4YOK, W5AKU, W5EPW, W5ESE, W5ETK, W5QLF, W5WAX, W5XW, W6FU, W6JHQ, W6LX, W6PRI, W6TUR, W6VNR, W7AU, W7GVE, W7LNG, W7ZMD, W8AWE, W8FDV, W8WTS, W9CBT, W9ILF, W9KTB, W9VBQ, WA1AB1, WA2QQF, WA4ONV, WA5ETK, WA5MUF, WA5OLT, WA6BXV, WA6FEJ, WA6OCP, WA7GSN, WA7YAZ, WA8OKR, WA8TOX, WA9QNN, WA9QWX, WA9WJB, WA9ZWB, WA9ZJI, WA0VQY, WB1EDI, WB3CQD, WB6CGJ, WB6IYM, WB7QBO, WB8CFO, WB8OGK, WB8RVK, WB8YY, WB9CIS, WB9HFK, WB9MII, WB0B, WB0CNK, WD8NVN, WD8RIF, WDOAVV, WF5W, WI9X, WN4KPG, WN9U, W0CWU, W0CZ, W0ESE, W0FCL, W0IS, W0KIZ, W0LER, W0LMS, W0TUP, WR7Q, Y19MI/AD7MI

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