

ARRL Straight Key Night 2011

Where amateurs go to find a *Peaceful, Easy Feeling*.

Dan Henderson, N1ND
ARRL Regulatory Information Manager

It is funny how moods change when operating your Amateur Radio transmitter. There are times when you will pour all of your energy into a pileup, trying to work the DXpedition that has travelled to that rare entity. At other times, you might be laser-focused into handling traffic on the state NTS or emergency net — simply trying to do your part during crunch time. At some other time you may spend hours running stations during a contest, or if that is not your operating style, you may do some “search-and-pounce” to find a few counties or states you need to work for some wallpaper you are chasing.

When we accomplish our goals during those activities, we are rewarded with a great feeling of accomplishment — something to brag about at the next club meeting or to share with your friends on the repeater. Many hams will contend there is nothing quite like the “*Peaceful, Easy Feeling*” that comes with the laid-back operating event known as ARRL Straight Key Night (SKN).

For a brief 24 hour period once a year — 0000 to 2400 UTC January 1 — the often hectic nature of everyday Amateur Radio takes a breather. Instead of structured nets or contact rates of 150 an hour, during SKN you find dozens of amateurs relaxing, letting their fists do the talking as they recapture, if but briefly, some of the enchantment of our father’s (and grandfather’s) Amateur Radio.

A Fistful of Fun

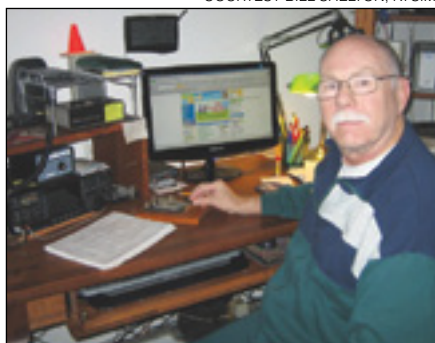
The 191 reports received for SKN 2011 show that the glamour of this operating event has not dulled. The eager participants reported 1467 contacts from almost every state — and several foreign countries. As Bill Gerth, W4RK, licensed for over 55 years, put it, the participants appreciate “the opportunity it affords us Old Timers to relive the past in such a wonderful way,” but SKN is not just for long-time licensees. When you read the list of participants submitting entries you will find calls that are more recent as well — KB9, KI4 and more. SKN is not just a trip down memory lane for seasoned licensees — it is the opportunity for newer amateurs to experience a small part of the magic of our common heritage.



HELEN MAHONEY, K16LQV

Doug, K6JEY, lit up the ether on 40 meters.

When you read the comments posted by participants in the ARRL Online Soapbox (www.arrl.org/soapbox) you quickly realize that part of the “peaceful, easy feeling” can be found as amateurs “reconnect” with not only straight keys and CW, but with some of the equipment of their early days in the hobby. Many operators use SKN as the opportunity (or excuse) to dust off some of the gear of their youth to see if they still remember how it works. Thanks go to the many operators who shared part of their story in the Soapbox thus allowing many others to share in the experience.



COURTESY BILL SHELTON, K7SIM

Bill, K7SIM, went from playing the bagpipes to playing with a J-38 key for SKN.

As always, numerous reports of good fists and interesting contacts were mentioned. One-hundred-three different operators were nominated at least once for having the Best Fist with Kent, K9ZTV; Ralph, WB8DQT; Larry, W8IX; Michael, W4IT, and Henry, W2QF, each receiving two votes. A total of 84 operators received a nomination from one of the peers for Most Interesting contact consideration, with Bill, N4TS; John, N2BE; Michael, W4IT, and Carl, WB0CFF, each receiving two votes. Congratulations for helping make SKN enjoyable for those participating.

For those who participated, recalling the peaceful time and easy feelings of SKN 2011 is only a brief nod into reverie away. For those looking for one of the better experiences in the hobby, start setting your mindset to SKN 2012. It will be here sooner than you think.

Stations Participating in SKN 2011

AA2YV, AA4RA, AA4TB, AA4ZS, AA0QZ, AB8FJ, AB0XE, AC7JW, AE3A, AE4MZ, AE7CG, AF8A, HP1AC, HP11BF, JH1GNU, JR1NKN, K1LEE, K1LNL, K1SEZ, K2KEY, K2NPN, K2TV, K3BVQ, K3MD, K4EOR, K4HGX, K4TP, K5BZH, K5HK, K5ICW, K5LY, K5LYT, K5RIX, K5SOH, K6CSL, K6CTW, K6FFY, K6JEY, K6KQV, K6LG, K6LQ, K6PBQ, K6ZY, K7SIM, K7TFW, K7WA, K7XC, K7ZYV, K8JV, K8QMN, K8UC, K9LA, K9VKY, K9VP, K9WWT, K9YA, K9ZTV, KA4JQZ, KA6ROD, KA7T, KA8NNY, KA8QQF, KB5IRC, KB8PGW, KB8TL, KB8TXZ, KB9ZBN, KC2KWA, KC2LMX, KC7YE, KC8UR, KC0GXX, KD2JC, KD5QHV, KD6WKY, KF4IZE, KF8KS, KG4KGY, KH6OU, KI4EZX, KI0G, KI0KM, K0CDJ, K0CY, K0LWV, KT3A, KW6G, N2BE, N2GT, N2KZ, N3RIK, N5BNU, N5LH, N5LUL, N5SV, N6TCZ, N6ZFO, N7CQR, N8KC, N8KV, N9BOR, N9NM, NG2T, NJ3K, NJ3Z, NM0C, NM0L, N0BGT, N0JBF, N0TK, NQ4Q, NU7T, ON6ZJ, VA3RKM, VE3LC, VE3NGS, VE5BCS, VE7NI, VO1NA, W1HIS, W1OH, W1RO/7, W1RV, W1TPB, W2LG, W2LID, W2QJH, W3CEI, W3DF, W3GK, W4OTN, W4RK, W4RKC, W4STX, W4UR, W4YOK, W5DY, W5ESE, W5FBQ, W5JBV, W5PDW, W5QLF, W5ROS (WA5KRP, W5XW, operating), W5UX, W6IEE, W6JHQ, W6VNR, W7GVE, W7LNG, W7QH, W7UYJ, W7YS, W8IX, W9FCC, W9YO, WA1ABI, WA2KBZ, WA2QQF, WA2YSJ, WA4KEZ, WA4OAB, WA4ONV, WA5AU, WA5J, WA5OLT, WA5ZKO, WA6BXV, WA7GSN, WA7YUL, WA8TOX, WA9ZBW, WA9ZJI, WA0JLY, WA0VQY, WB5LRP, WB5NMZ, WB6AAJ, WB6SCA, WB8CFO, WB8LZG, WB9HFK, WB9MII, WB0B, WB0CFF, WB0CJB, WD8RIF, WD9EWK, W0KU, W0SZP, W0TT, WS9E, WX4MAP. **Q57-**