

TARC Novice CW Net After Action Report W5AWS

1 Action

With the enthusiasm of Ky, KY5VAR, organizing; and the willingness of Mike, KI5EGH, to act as Net Control; and the willing participation of *netizens*: Remell, KA6DOY; Lawrence, KI5URK; Blayne, K5HUN; and Andrew, W5AWS; we inaugurated the first Tulsa Amateur Radio Club CW Net on 7.037 MHz at 1900 hrs local on Monday, 3 July 2023.

1.1 Why?

Why the After Action Report (AAR)? Main reason is that W5AWS occupies the role of Historian for the Tulsa Amateur Radio Club, so it is good to have a record of club events that we can put on the web-site and add to the one hundred years history of club existence. Another reason is that W5AWS likes to record significant events, and this event is significant in the recent life of the club.

2 Purpose

With KI5EGH elmering with the help of KA6DOY, both much more experienced CW operators than the rest of us, we did the most important thing which is to get on the air and practice Morse Telegraphy. One way, perhaps the best way, to gain experience is to gain it in a live situation. Yes our sending was a mess, but every time we practice like this, we will become better operators. Despite the mess, it was fun.

3 Traffic Plan

Prior to the event, Net Control, KI5EGH, announced this traffic plan, which is useful to have a copy on paper that we can follow while listening.

- ◆ CW Net preamble
 - TARC TARC DE KI5EGH NOVICE CW NET NOW OPEN ALL STATIONS
WELCOME QND QNN KI5EGH/MIKE/SAPULPA QNZ VVV
 - QND = Net is directed
 - QNN = Net Control Operator (NCO) is
 - QNZ = Zero-beat my signal, in this case VVV
 - QST QST QST DE KI5EGH KI5EGH
GE ALL /
OP MIKE MIKE/
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS OVER THE LAZY DOG
 - The last transmission is a pangram containing all the letters of the alphabet
- ◆ Now take check-ins to the net

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➤ QNI QNI QNI

NCO waits for responses from the listening stations and makes a list of those responding with their call-signs

KY5VAR

W5AWS

KA6DOY

KG5MEH

etc.

➤ RRR

Acknowledges receipt of checked-in stations and transmits the call-signs of those heard

➤ I HAVE

KY5VAR

W5AWS

KA6DOY

KG5MEH

➤ Repeats QNI as needed to fill any unheard stations wanting to check in to the net

➤ RRR

Proceeds down the list calling each station in turn like this

➤ KY5VAR DE KI5EGH GE TU UR 5NN 5NN QTH SAPULPA BK

Direct call requesting KY5VAR respond to KI5EGH: says “good evening”, “thank you”, your signal received at 599, my location is Sapulpa, followed by the “break” prosign

➤ KI5EGH DE KY5VAR GE TU UR 55N 55N QTH TULSA BK

KY5VAR replies to KI5EGH, saying “good evening”, “thank you, your signal received at 599, my location is Tulsa, followed by the “break” prosign

➤ KY5VAR DE KI5EGH TU 73 73 E E

KI5EGH replies to KY5VAR, saying “thank you” and “goodbye”. The final dit dit is generally accepted contact (QSO) terminating practice.

➤ KI5EGH DE KY5VAR TU 73 73 E E

KY5VAR replies to KI5EGH the same way with the final two dit dits signaling the end of the QSO

➤ NCO will call the next person on the list, and so on to the end of the list then close the net.

4 Coordination

We coordinated our training activity using group-text messages. KI5EGH occasionally sent the <AS> prosign to pause the net while he texted instructions to us. We exchanged images of our keys.

Figure 1: KI5EGH Ye olde J38 straight key



Figure 2: W5AWS Himound HK-707 straight key



KI5EGH's Ye Olde J38 straight key is a good-looking piece of machinery mounted on a nice piece of walnut, by the looks of it, with a knob made out of an Oklahoma quarter coin, Figure 1.

Figure 2 is the Himound HK-707 straight key, attractive to W5AWS by the dust cover over the mechanism, the fact that it doesn't move around on the desk when operated, and its compact size.

Figure 3 is the Vibroplex bug favored by KY5VAR, another piece of good-looking machinery, an ingenious device that vibrates to produce dits. It was first patented in 1892 and sold to telegraphers as an answer to what we know now as carpal tunnel syndrome, or then as "glass arm".

Figure 4 is the cootie side-swiper used by K5HUN. It, too, is good-looking, but its operation is very different to bug, straight key, or paddle. You can find a good explanation of the side-swiper and video demonstration at this URL:



<https://www.hamradioqrp.com/2016/12/ewww-cooties.html>

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Figure 3: KY5VAR Vibroplex bug



Figure 4: K5HUN Cootie key



5 On The Air

During Field Day 2023 I witnessed Rick, WD5ETD, operating with his Penntek TR-45L, which has a built-in Z-match tuner and rechargeable battery. However, I wasn't thrilled by the aesthetics of knobs front and back of the radio, still I did like the additional band over the TR-35, meter, variable notch, audio filter, and adjustable sidetone. Visiting the Penntek website revealed a TR-45L Skinny that is the same device minus rechargeable battery and tuner, a very attractive package that resulted in a sale and surprisingly quick delivery.

Since I'm the club historian, I wanted a record of what we sounded like on the air, so I made an audio recording of the activity at my QTH—I'm also Mr. Nerd, but that's by the way. I got the recording by placing the recorder on the desk adjacent to the workspace. Well, duh! After I recorded the audio, I realized that I could have connected the line-in of the recorder to the phone output of the TR-45L Skinny which remains active with the speaker engaged. Next time I will eliminate any ambient noise using a phone-to-line-in connection.

In the recording, you can hear me going at the key like a bull at a gate, all intention of going at a sedate pace dissipated in the excitement of the moment. If interested, download the recording from this location:

<https://drive.proton.me/urls/X7QNMSRJHW#PadIFVwaPCwK>

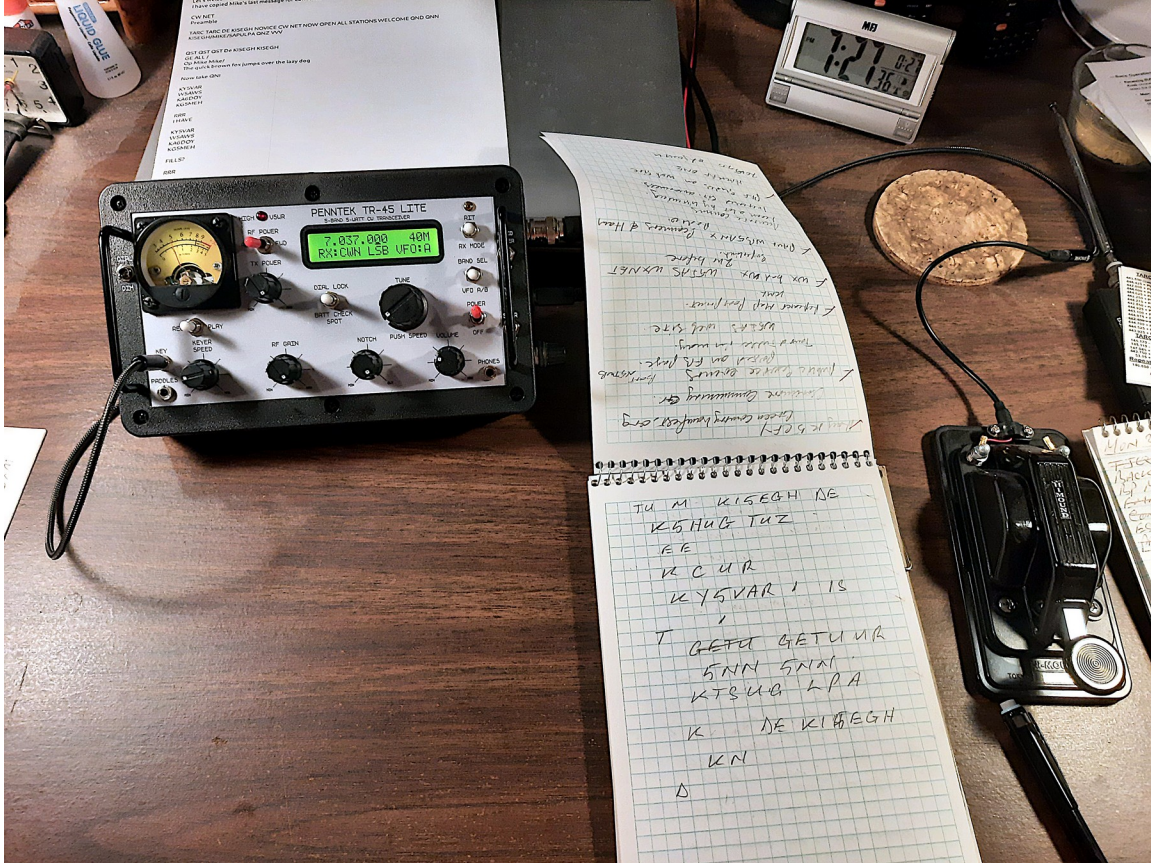


At my QTH, I have S6 and more levels of RFI and I used a mag-loop antenna inside, a sub-optimal arrangement, especially as mag-loops perform better in less confined

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surroundings without things like metal filing-cabinets that tend to de-tune the antenna. Still, I'm located between KI5EGH and KY5VAR, so I had the mag-loop oriented along that bearing, which meant that my signal wasn't strong enough to be heard much by KA6DOY to my west. Figure 5 is a picture of my operating position.

Figure 5: W5AWS Station, portable setup



Even with an SWR of 3:1, CW can get through. KI5EGH reported my signal as 599. Also, the CW bandwidth is about 500 Hz, so the high Q of the mag-loop isn't too much of a problem.

6 Conclusion

We made a very good start getting on the air with CW. It helps to have had some practice with the code beforehand, using a code practice oscillator and listening to machine-generated code. However, the real learning happens when trying to make contact through the QRM, QRN, QSB, and RFI, working the radio to clarify the signal. Act of listening helps train the filter between one's ears to extract information. And a friendly no-stress environment is an invaluable place to learn.