

Classic Exchange Newsletter

Fall 2023

CQ CX de K3MSB.....

Another CX has come and gone, and it seems that a good time was had by everyone in spite of less than “Solar Maximum” expected conditions. I saw no comments that any contacts were made on 10 or 15 Meters. Here, 80 Meters was pretty dismal as well.

We had several newcomers to the CX and I want to extend a warm welcome to all of you.

The chat page is getting regular usage and I'm glad to see that it's facilitating CX activity.

A number of people indicated that they tried to qualify some radios but didn't succeed with the required 3 QSOs. Even if you do not qualify a radio, let us know what it is anyway.

It's getting harder and harder to find weekends that are free from contests to offer CXers a relaxing time on the air with their vintage gear. So, over the past few months Ron, Howie, and I have been playing kick the can with some alternatives. One of the ideas that was brought up is a monthly 3 hour Sprint starting in April. The time would be 8 to 11 PM with a sliding week day and time zone. April would be Monday ET, June would be Tuesday CT, August would be Wednesday MT, and October would be Thursday PT. Anyone can operate in any CX Sprint, but we want to give “prime time” to various locations around the country. Contest activity drops off from April to October (unfortunately the grass starts to grow....), so the Sprint concept might afford CXers with some time to relax after yard work in a low key non-contest environment event that we want the CX to be. Nothing has been decided, it one of a few ideas in the concept phase. The Sprints would not replace the existing Fall and Winter CX events. What are your thoughts on this? Let us know.

73 Mark K3MSB
CX Newsletter Editor

The Sweet Chirp Awards!



Congratulations!

Toby VE7CNF: BC-458A & DX-40

Scott KA6IOM: Conar Twins.

Ricky KR7W: Elmac AF-68

WB2AWQ/7: BC-458A

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CW Only Scores

4 Or More Pairs

CALL	NAME	SCORE
JA3KNB	KAZU	436,450
K2RP	RON	41,208
KR7W	RICKY	23,275
N6KN	ROCCO	14,525

3 Or Fewer Pairs

CALL	NAME	SCORE
JO2TAP	TOMO	16,878
K9VKY	BRIAN	28,928
WB2AWQ	HOWIE	20,370
K3MSB	MARK	16,356
K4BSK	EARL	14,520
N5GW	GENE	12,496
VE7BGP	GERRY	1,068
VA7MM	MARK	7,839
W8KGI	JIM	11,356
KG5IEE	RANDAL	11,310
VE7CNF	TOBY	4,926
K4JYS	BILL	4,932
KV1X	BOB	2,412
K9NUD	STEVE	2,394
W6MZ	PAUL	2,088
N2DA	CRAIG	1,980
N1LN	BRUCE	1,874
W8KM	GARY	600
KD1RT	ROY	588

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Phone Only Scores

4 Or More Pairs

CALL	NAME	PHONE SCORE
JA3KNB	KAZU	527,874

3 Or Fewer Pairs

CALL	NAME	PHONE SCORE
JO2TAP	TOMO	22,892
VE7BGP	GERRY	10,920
K2RP	RON	10,020
VA7MM	MARK	3,914
VE7CNF	TOBY	2,904
K3MSB	MARK	1,104

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Mixed (Phone + CW) Scores

4 Or More Pairs

CALL	NAME	CW SCORE	PHONE SCORE	TOTAL
JA3KNB	KAZU	436,450	527,874	964,324
K2RP	RON	41,208		41,208
KR7W	RICKY	23,275		23,275
N6KN	ROCCO	14,525		14,525

3 Or Fewer Pairs

CALL	NAME	CW SCORE	PHONE SCORE	TOTAL
JO2TAP	TOMO	16,878	22,892	39,770
K9VKY	BRIAN	28,928		28,928
WB2AWQ	HOWIE	20,370		20,370
K3MSB	MARK	16,356	1,104	17,460
K4BSK	EARL	14,520		14,520
N5GW	GENE	12,496		12,496
VE7BGP	GERRY	1,068	10,920	11,988
VA7MM	MARK	7,839	3,914	11,753
W8KGI	JIM	11,356		11,356
KG5IEE	RANDAL	11,310		11,310
K2RP	RON		10,020	10,020
VE7CNF	TOBY	4,926	2,904	7,830
K4JYS	BILL	4,932		4,932
KV1X	BOB	2,412		2,412
K9NUD	STEVE	2,394		2,394
W6MZ	PAUL	2,088		2,088
N2DA	CRAIG	1,980		1,980
N1LN	BRUCE	1,874		1,874
W8KM	GARY	600		600
KD1RT	ROY	588		588

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**N1LN – Bruce
Chapel Hill NC**

Bruce entered the following two setups into the CX:



Heathkit DX-60 / HG-10 and Hammarlund HQ-129X

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Heathkit HW-104A and SB-644 VFO

The HW-104 came out in 1975, a year after the better known SB-104 was first introduced. It was offered as a low cost alternative to the SB-104.

The SB-104A, which fixed a lot of the issues in the SB-104, came out in 1977, the same year HW-104 production ended.

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KD1RT – Roy
Westfield MA

Roy writes:

“I stumbled upon your event after researching a "CQ CX" call heard on 40m CW. It seemed like a good reason to put the old Kenwood TS-530 into use. This rig was purchased new in 1981 after obtaining my General ticket. A similarly aged Heathkit HD-1410 keyer/ paddle I built back then was also used for the CX QSOs.”



Hi Ray! Thanks for playing in the CX and we hope you'll stop by for future events!

Similar to you, I purchased a TS-830S in 1982 from a close friend that had purchased it new a few years earlier. It was used as my main HF radio until the early 2000's when I sold it to pay for a new Icom IC-746 Pro. I still regret selling it! Over the years I've used a borrowed TS-530S for the CX and it is a fine radio. The Kenwood hybrids just keep chugging along!

Roy's QTH is in an HOA restricted area and he is running a stealth vertical antenna in a pine tree behind his shed. It is made of 21 feet of 14 gauge Romex fed with a 9:1 UNUN.

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K2BLA – Albert
Deland FL

Al used two setups for the CX, a Drake TR-7 and a Collins 75S3 with homebrew transmitter:



Al writes:

“Thanks for the CX QSO. Since I worked you with my 75S3 and homebrew transmitter, I thought I would tell you a bit more about the transmitter. The unit on top of the 75S3 is an exciter, about 1 watt output, to drive a 50w amp which is on the floor with the power supply. The frequency is synthesized and controlled by an Arduino UNO. It operates on 20 and 30 CW only. I also built an accessory keyer, using another UNO, which delays the RF output by about 20ms in order to allow the T/R relay to pick up to avoid “hot switching” and

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causing the first dot or dash to have a steep rise time and a key click. The transmitter is semi-break-in so the delay is only when the transmitter changes from receive to transmit.”

Yet another person melding the new with the old! We're seeing more and more of this in the CX and these new “hybrids” are always interesting to see and work.

If you subscribe to ER magazine you'll know that Al has had a few articles published in that fine periodical. Al told me

“I see you are a proud owner of a collection of ARC-5 command sets. I worked for Aircraft Radio from 1976 to 1984. At that time it was the Aircraft Radio and Control division of Cessna Aircraft. I have written several articles and given presentations on ARC and ARC-5 command sets. I also wrote a couple of papers about the Rockaway Valley and the Boonton, NJ, area, where I lived for 20 years until I moved here to FL in 1991. My papers have been published in Electric Radio Magazine and the QCWA Journal and presentations at IEEE conferences.”

Al, we all appreciate your efforts to preserve the history of ARC and their fine radios.

N2DA – Craig
Forest VA

Craig writes:

“Fun QSOs, all CW this year. The HW-100 (which I built in 1970 after getting my General class license) helped warm up the shack this year. I made one QSO with my homebrew "W5LET" one tube (50C5) 8 watt transmitter on 40 Meters. On the receive side, my buddy Randal (KG5IEE) in TX needed multiple repeats and gave me a 229 RST (the lowest I've ever received Hi Hi), but we made contact!”

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Nicely done Craig, and a very tidy homebrew transmitter you have!

**WB2AWQ/7 – Howie
Reno NV**

Howie writes:

“Howdy CXers!

This CX I planned on being in the 3 or fewer category, only because I’m basically lazy! What I didn’t count on was equipment failure. Now, the three pairs I chose were my WW2 GO-9 paired with my NC-125 (mostly for 20 meters), my BC-458A of chirp fame with my ORIGINAL Novice receiver that my Dad bought, a BC-348Q, and my HB 807s TX of 1939 design and a 1938 HRO.”

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GO-9 left, BC-348Q and HRO to the right of it



HB 807s driven by a 42 tube



BC-458A on the left, matching capacitor to its left.



NC-125

“There was some solar activity on Sunday, October 29, where the K index went up to 4, so the bands were kinda limited in propagation. But 20 meters seemed to be THE band, at least for me given none of the equipment I selected covered anything higher. And 20 was OK given the solar activity. But the GO-9, which I’ve had for some 15 years with very few issues, decided to stop working after just 6 QSOs on 20M. Not wishing to waste those QSOs and wanting to stay in the 3 or fewer category, I decided to switch to 40M, which was fairly quiet in the mid-afternoon. I changed to the HB/HRO combo, qualified that, then went to the BC-458A/BC-348 combo to finish up.”

“40M Went till about 8:30 local, and 80M never showed any promise. The HB rig has no 20M coils, so 20M was out. I managed a QSO with Toby VE7CNF, and we had a BC-458A to BC-458A QSO, always a chirpy treat! Some new (for me) CXers: Harry W1AAX with a Drake B line, Tom KB9UWR with a TS-520, David KI7NRI with an Omni D, Fritz K6EE with a B/W 5100B and a German RX RFT EKD300 (never heard of it before), Ed WA7DAX with a Viking Valiant/75A4,

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Ricky KR7W with a Ranger and SX101, Vic WA7A with a Globe Chief/R4B, Bob WO6W with a Drake TR4CW, Carlos W7RCH with an Icom IC756Pro, Oliver W6VD with a Kenwood TS-440S, and Don NF7R with a Viking Valiant and HRO60. Hope they all come back next winter! Always nice to make new friends!

A big shout out to those who stumbled on CX: Terry KD2FSH, Vic WA6MCL, Bob K7ZB, Mark K6JJR, Doug K7BNY, Paul VE7NRI, Peter KG7MVH, Rob N6KIX (who I've QSO'ed many many times), KN6EZE, and Paul VE7TL. Bring 'em on!

The Chirp award has to go to Toby VE7CNF with HIS BC-458A, but a close second was Scott KA6IOM with his Conar twins. A very nice chirp!

Always enjoy my QSOs with John WB8APR, with whom I've had many early AM QSOs. But he didn't get HIS BC-459 out, then with VE7CNF we could have had a three-way chirp-fest.

Nice to have so many old CX friends show up, and many of the major brands were represented (and some not so major!) Plus I worked both head honchos, K3MSB and K2RP.

Conditions were much better Tuesday, but Halloween sorta got in the way. Nonetheless, I made 11 more QSOs, 8 in less than an hour and still daylight, then 3 more after we turned off the lights, all on 40M with the BC458A/BC348Q. See ya all at the Winter CX!"

73, Howie WB2AWQ

K3MSB – Mark
York PA

As Howie noted in his comments, the solar activity degraded the higher bands. I heard no activity on 10 or 15 meter CW. Surprisingly, I heard no CX activity on 80 Meter CW either. The bread and butter bands were 20 and 40M, and I think my 47 CW QSOs were pretty much split between those bands.

Since I had an SSB radio available, I did make a showing in the Phone part of the event, making 7 QSOs on 40 Meters and 5 QSOs on 20 Meters. I note that of those 12 QSOs only 4 were CX QSOs – W7OS Doc running a TR4, John K0IP on his 618T, Dick on his FT101ZD, and Jim W7JMP on his TS-530S. 4 Of the SSB QSOs were from POTA (Parks On The Air) folks answering my CQ CX. None of the POTA folks had problems giving a CX exchange and it gave me a chance to let them know what the CX was.

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My three setups for this CX were as follows:



B&W 5100 and R-390A

The Vibroplex bug dates from 1946:



Note my improvised “Bug Tamer”.... a square grinding stone secured with painter's tape.... hey, it works....

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Drake 2B/2BQ / DX-60B / HG-10B

The bug used with this setup was my 1919 Blue Racer – 104 Years old!



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Kenwood TS-520S

This was a radio that came from an estate sale that I had for testing. I used it for both the Phone and CW parts of the CX.

It was good to run into the CX regulars and great to see some newer CX'ers returning for the Fall event. I even ran into Mac WQ8U on 40M CW running his Ten Tec Jupiter!

I do note from my log I did hear a few chirps in the crowd.... Ricky KR7W running a Elmac AF-68 and Toby VE7CNF running his DX-40! Howie, I didn't see a "C" beside the RST I sent you in this CX – I hope my hearing isn't going!

For all you west coast guys, I do make an effort to stay up late to work you on 40 and 80 Meters, but I usually nod off around 2 AM ET.

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**K4BSK – Earl
Matthews NC**

Earl did not submit and soapbox comments this time around, but I note from his log that he ran three stations in this CX:

TS-440S, Eico 720 / HQ-120, Collins 32S3 / 75S3B

Earl managed 44 CW QSOs with simple wire antennas -- a Dipole and a G5RV ! Nicely done sir!

It's been a while since I've heard an Eico 720 on the air.

**N5GW – Gene
Jackson MS**

Gene writes:

“Here is my collection of toys that includes the Triton 544, SB-102 and HW-8.

Also in the picture are homebrew audio filters and memory keyer with homebrew rake tine paddles. The SB-102 with its 19 tubes keeps the shack warm during winter!”



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What are “rake tine” paddles? Paddles made from rake tines !!



W6MZ – Paul
Del Mar CA

Paul did not provide any soapbox comments. His log shows he ran the following stations in the CW part of the CX:

Drake T4X / R4

Meissner Signal Shifter / RME-69

Hombrew 6L6 Crystal Controlled TX / Drake 2A

KR7W – Ricky
Ammon ID

Ricky qualified 5 pairs for this CX:



6V6 Homebrew Slat Board TX and Hallicrafters SX71

Ricky writes:

“This transmitter originally appeared in the Dec 1946 QST. I found it in the 1948 ARRL Handbook. It also appeared in ARRL’s Book ‘How to Become a Radio Amateur- targeted to the new Novice License class.”

“This is a homebrew Crystal Controlled 6V6 tube transmitter- sometimes called the ‘Slat Board Transmitter’. It was given to me, Not Working. I found the build article in the 1948 ARRL Handbook. Depending on the Crystal, the CW note is a bit chirpy to very chirpy. Paired with SX-71 RX, 6 QSOs were made on 40M.”

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I pulled out my 1948 ARRL Handbook, and “A Simple Single Tube Transmitter” project (Ricky's TX) is on page 168 of the 1948 ARRL Handbook and specifies either a 6V6 or 6F6 tube. When you've completed that project you can turn to page 170 and build the “Inexpensive Two Tube Transmitter” that uses a pair of 6V6, 6L6, or 6F6. Then, since you all warmed up, you can build the “Self Contained 60-Watt Transmitter for Three Bands” on page 173 that uses a 6V6 and 807! Ah! The dangers of having old handbooks on the shelf!

If you don't have a 1948 Handbook, <http://www.w7ekb.com> has the “Stat Board” article



The old original reliable pair: Globe Chief + VF1 and Hallicrafters SX-101

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Elmac AF-68 and Drake 2B

“The Elmac has a slight chirp. Most received RSTs ended in ‘8C’. Elmac was benched near the end of Tuesday’s CX, as it was emitting an Electrical Fire smell.”



Viking Ranger and Hallicrafters SX-101

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“The new to me Ranger turned out working way better than I imagined. “Sounds really good, perfect keying, like an IC-7300”, some critics remarked. No Chirp, no Key Clicks. I suspect that most CX Ops would tune right on by when looking for a CX participant to QSO with.”



Over all view of KR7W radio bench

Not explicitly shown, Ricky's 5th pair for the CX was the Elmac AF-68 and Hallicrafters SX-71

Ricky continues:

“None of KR7W’s TXs output more than 45 Watts to a HOA 20-40M Attic Fan Dipole. A total of 49 QSOs were made on Sunday and Tuesday on 20 and 40 Meters.

Best Signals: I nominate Toby, VE7CNF’s DX-40 for having the best Chirpy Signal. 2nd Best Chirpy Signal goes to Howie, WB2AWQ’s BC-458A. Also, Howie, WB2AWQ is nominated for having the best Bug Fist. Howie’s BC-458A’s unique Chirp and great Fist complement each other to create a great old timey signal. I’m sure that hundreds of hams who were tuning around the CW band stopped to listen to Howie’s signal.

Kudos to Mark, W7ESN of Spokane for offering up all homebrew equipment. 3 TXs and 1 (or more) receiver. All homebrew.

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Each CX, I look forward to making contact with Jim, W8KGI- to see how many TX-RX Pairs he will offer up. 9 QSOs were made with Jim.

Lastly, Many thanks to the CX Organizers, Ron K2RP and Mark K3MSB for making my most looked forward to ham radio event happen twice a year.”

VA7MM – Mark Coquitlam BC

Mark writes:

“For the CW event this year my DX-60B and Drake R4 receiver lead the operation”



“ Also participating on CW was my recently restored Yaesu FT-101ZD and Heathkit HD-1410 keyer”

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“The HD-1410 keyer has springy aluminum paddles. I built one of these in the '70s and learned iambic keying on it so I'm used to it. CW contacts were made on 80, 40 and 20m with hand key, Vibroplex Blue Racer bug and electronic iambic paddle keying used at different times.”

“For the phone event, a Swan 350 was restored and put into service. This 59 year old SSB transceiver joined the Yaesu FT-101ZD with SSB contacts made on 40 and 80m.”

“Antennas at VA7MM are dipoles suspended 100' above the ground between Douglas fir trees.”

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**VE7CNF– Toby
Burnaby BC**

Toby writes:

“This was great fun again, as always. The old gear was working well. I hope to get to another round of equipment restoration before the winter 2024 event. One day I’d like to have the receivers back in their boxes and looking pretty. As usual, the best chirp came from Howie WB2AWQ’s BC458 on 40M.

Toby ran the following gear in the CX:

Phone: DX-40 / HQ-129-X, FR-101B

CW: DX-40 / SX-71, BC-458A / HQ-129-X

**VE7BGP – Gerald
Nanaimo BC**

No soapbox comments were received from Gerry.

He ran the following gear in the CX:

CW: SB-101

Phone: SB-101, FT-7, IC720A, IC-751A, FT-897D

**W8KGI– Jim
Sandia Park NM**

Jim writes:

“Attached is my log for the fall 2023 CX. As you will see, I only managed to get

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on CW on 10/31, Tuesday. Family activities kept me busy other times.

I also limited myself to just 3 pairs in my "inside shack" which is heated. My garage shack was quite cold due to an invasion of arctic air. "

In various combinations, Jim ran the following equipment:

Receivers: Drake R4B, Collins 75A4, HRO-50

Transmitters: Drake T4X, CE-100V, and Collins 32V3

W8KM – Gary Parma MI

Here a photo of Gary's well equipped Collins station:



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Gary's time was limited in this CX and he writes

“ Hopefully I will have more time to operate for the next CX”.

K9VKY – Brian
Fombell, PA

Brian writes:

“Hello Ron, Mark, and the CX Crusaders---

Yet another great time was had hearing old friends and their chirping, clicking, and drifting signals. Sadly, the solar conditions weren't good with a low solar flux and high A and K indices, but it didn't stop the fun.

The digital and Canadian SSB ops ran me off my two crystal frequencies in the Renaissance Band (7100-7125 Kc), but the CQWW SSB contest diverted a lot of the congestion in the lower ends of the bands. Kudos to the CX scheduler(s) for that!

Back in the Sick, Lame, and Lazy category (three station, CW Only), the venerable PRC-1 Spy Radio Set (photo attached), Collins Twins, and a Collins 310B3 with HRO-5 mustered on three bands throughout the CX operating period.”



PRC-1 Spy Radio Set

“My thanks to those who put up with the paltry signals from the 310B3 and spy set.”

“A special tip of the hat to Jim, AJ8S, for putting his 1929 Hartley into the fray, along with Mark, W7ESN, with his all homebrew stations. Jim, W1PID, went forth bravely with his 3 watter and some skillful operating. For me, a big part of CX is ragchewing with the guys, and memorable QSOs were had with KT4ZM (over an hour), W1GF, WQ8U, AJ8S, and the 94 year old W8MYU. Who says amateur radio is a dying art?”

“With that, here's hoping all remain well with filaments lit, brass being pounded, and looking forward to the next CX.”

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N0VA – Ken
Grand Junction, CO

Ken writes:

“This was my first Classic Exchange and although I only worked a couple of hours and did not score well I still had fun. I have no real old gear, the oldest, a 50 yr old TS-520, is not a high multiplier. With no separate transmitters or receivers to pair I did not expect a big score. I planned to start off with my TenTec Corsair II but on first key up it just died. Lights out. Tried a different power supply but still nothing. I next went to my Swan 500 which has been performing well except for no sidetone so it's a bit of a challenge. However, it refused to tune up, no power out. What's going on here?

Next up was my TenTec Orion (2002) and it worked so I finally got into the CX. The next day I decided to get my Kenwood TS-520 (1973) off the shelf and online and it worked very well. I spent all my time on 20 meters. Since having fun was my main objective I did that and am looking forward to the next Classic Exchange.

Next time I will start with the TS-520 and maybe move on to a TenTec Argosy II (525D, 1983) which puts out 50W max and is enjoyable to use with a bug. No electronic keyers were involved in my small CX effort.

Welcome to the CX Ken! Even though we list participants in score order, it really doesn't matter. The main point is to get the old gear on the air and have fun.