

What's an Avid CW Ham Operator?

Introduction:

Have you ever wondered what draws people to Amateur Radio? What lures them to Morse code (CW) and drives them to become an Avid CW Ham Operator? What makes them prefer operating CW rather than other modes? What did it take to become an Avid CW Ham Operator? And are they different from the non-CW ham operators?

I am very interested in finding the answers to these and other questions so when I teach the next CW class, I can pass this information along so they can understand what really makes it work. And also help them to better understand the total effort of what it takes.

I have been studying this subject a long time, and to change the above questions down to one; "What Makes an Avid CW Ham Operator"? The only way I know how to answer this question is to ask more questions, review the comments from others, and come up with a summary and just maybe the real reason.

I am writing this to the Ham community who should be familiar with the terms I use; however, if you're not a Ham but interested in what makes people do different things, may I encourage you to take the time to research the terms using the internet to find there meaning. Maybe you'll become interested in Amateur Radio as I did and become an Avid CW Ham Operator. 😊

What's a Ham?

In searching the internet "Wiki" it states that "An **Amateur Radio Operator** (Ham) is someone who uses equipment at an [amateur radio station](#) to engage in [two-way](#) personal communications with other amateur operators on [radio frequencies assigned to the amateur radio service](#). Amateur radio operators have been granted an [amateur radio license](#) by a governmental regulatory authority after passing an examination on applicable regulations, electronics, and radio theory and operation. As a component of their license, amateur radio operators are assigned a [call sign](#) that they use to identify themselves during communication."

In 2014 the W5ALT Web Page studies show that CW is not dead! And I quote, "Based on the data presented here, it appears premature to announce the death of Morse code on the amateur HF bands. Instead, there may be an increase in activity in recent years. Based on various data sources, it appears that the overall activity on the ham bands is close to evenly split between SSB and CW, with digital modes accounting for less than 10% of the total activity. Overall SSB does enjoy about 5% more activity than CW, but that is not an overwhelming percentage."

I haven't been able to find much on the internet about why people become Amateur Radio operators (Ham) let-a-lone what other think "What Makes an Avid CW Ham Operator".

Questions:

So here are a few questions I have come up with to narrow down an answer:

What is an Avid CW Ham Operator?

What Makes an Avid CW Ham Operator?

Why do we need to know What Makes an Avid CW Ham Operator?

What's an Avid CW Ham Operator?

Research:

After asking a lot of Avid CW Ham Operators these questions, none of them could identify one or multiple things that attracted them to the love of CW. So I have to ask myself, why am I an Avid CW Ham Operator? I need to know what drives me as a Ham who would rather operate CW then picking up a microphone or any other mode available in Amateur Radio.

In searching my inner most thoughts and feelings to answer these questions, and why I love CW and what drives me to do it in the first place, I thought I had the answer because it was different for me. But after reviewing my own story and studying a little psychology, ☺ I'm not sure if that's true. Or was it that much different for me than other people, but they just haven't been able to put their finger on it yet? So let's take a journey in my history in Amateur Radio.

The Journey:

Let's start this journey with my story and recalling the memories of my youth. Let's start in 1963 when I was licensed as a Novice operator (WN4PVW); I can say with certainty things were different back then as compared to today in 2014. Well, let's go back even farther, to 1952 where I think it really began with my dad giving me a crystal radio kit on my eighth birthday.

After building the kit, I was hooked on the magic of hearing radio stations on this small group of parts requiring no power to work, and moving that little wire called a "Cat Whisker" to a special place on the Galena crystal to hear an AM radio station. From there, my interest sored to try and understand how all this worked. I started reading the electronic magazines like Popular Electronics and Electronics Illustrated that my dad would bring home.

My dad had different radio sets around the house when I was growing up, and I started listening to the AM radio Band (550-1600Kcs). Back then the entertainment came from listen to the radio. I remember listening to the shows when I went to bed. There were lots of famous actors that started in radio before making it in the film industry. Jack Benny, Lucille Ball, The Marks brothers, and the shows like Inter-Sanctum, The Green Hornet, The Lone Ranger, Amos and Andy, and many more. Boy this is really going back. But in 2014 it's a totally different world.

I think what really got me hooked, was when my uncle (K4HUH) gave me an old National NC-100 receiver. It was so exciting to listen to "The Voice of America" (VOA), "The British Broadcasting Company" (BBC) and many other foreign broadcasts, and hearing all the different languages on the radio. It was really neat to hear the hams talking to each other from around the world on AM. However, there were also a few of them that I didn't understand, which had this funny duck like voice until I turned on the BFO and adjusted the pitch to where I could understand them. Of course today we know this duck like sound as a different type of modulation called Single Side Band (SSB), which really got my interest in Amateur Radio. Even though I spent hours and hours turning that huge tuning knob on the NC-



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100 and logging all the Short Wave programs; but listening to the Hams talking to each other and wondering how they did that really captured my imagination and interest for the first time in my life. Thinking back, I believe this was the first time I took a real interest in anything.

Back then, I was raised in southern New York in a city called Miami, Florida. ☺ I'm kidding of course, but it was commonly known as that, because of all the people from the New York area coming down to Miami during the winter season where it was usually warmer and mild. That's another story. Let's see where was I? Oh yes, Years later, I remember my dad telling me about a Ham Radio Store in down town Miami. But at the time it didn't sink into my scattered pea brain, and I don't remember the name of the store; too many years have passed since then. However, my brain finally clicked one day and I asked my dad if I could go to work with him on a Saturday. Since he was an automobile mechanic and work down town for a car manufacture called Nash Motors, do you remember the Nash? Sorry, this ole scattered brain took off on different adventure. The car dealership was also located in down town Miami, and because he worked a half day on Saturday, maybe we could stop off at the Ham Radio store on the way home.

We did, and it was great! I remember looking at all that equipment, new and used, huge and huger, and everything was way out of my price range since I was just a young boy not yet a teenager at the time with no income. So I looked at the book section and picked up a small book by the ARRL titled "How to become a Novice". My dad bought it for me and I think it was fifty cents back then.

I remember after getting home from the ham store, I immediately started scanning the book and looking at the pictures and diagrams. Studying was something that I really didn't enjoy or understand, but the subject fascinated me. At that age I didn't know how to study, and today I am not very skilled at it even after all these years. But now as I think back, I believe this is where learning Morse code helped me in my life, but more on that later. But I just about wore out the pages in that book and realized I needed to pass the 5 WPM code test before taking the written test to become a Novice Ham Operator.

How it was to get a license:

Since this is all about going back in my youth to find some answers; there is a lot of **differences** between today (2014) and what was involved in acquiring an Amateur license in the 1960's. As I recall, the only way to get into Amateur Radio back then was by either passing the Novice or Technicians license test. The Technicians license allowed the ham to operate all modes available to them on all the bands starting at 50 MHz and above. No Repeaters or VHF/UHF Hand Helds back then. It was considered an experimenters license because the code test was 5 WPM but the theory test was technical, and the license was renewable. Whereas the Novice license was the same code test level (5 WPM) but the theory was not so technical; mostly frequencies and procedures as I recall, and the license was not renewable after a year. The Novice class license would limit the operator to sections of the HF bands on 80, 40, and 15 meters, **but only CW**. Plus phone privileges on two meters, and the test could be given by a General or Extra class ham. To continue in Amateur radio from a Novice Class license, would require an upgrade to General, Conditional or Technicians Class license. If you were within 200 miles of an FCC office, and you wanted to upgrade to General, you were required to be at the FCC office on only a certain time and day of

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the month, with a bunch of other people wanting to do the same thing. Then sit in front of a grumpy old man who would give you the 13 WPM code test on the biggest shakiest table in the world. There were no true or false questions or fill in the blanks. It was all hand written and he had to read what was written down to determine if you passed the receiving test. Then to complete the code test, you had to send to him at 13 WPM or better using their straight key which was bolted to that same shaky table. Then everyone was asked to leave the room and wait outside the office until their name was called. If you passed the receiving and sending code test, you were asked to come back in the room and sit at the same table and take the written theory test for the General Class license. If your name was not called, you never found out what part of the CW test you failed and you just went home (no questions asked!). If you passed the written test, you would receive your license in the mail in 6 to 8 weeks or a notice of failure in 4 weeks. Then to upgrade to Extra Class you had to **wait two years** before you could even apply, and then go through the same situation but at 20 WPM receiving and sending on that same shaky table, and you had to know your electronics to pass the written test. Back then the license study guides didn't have all the questions and answers like they do today. They only covered the subject matter for the class of license with a technical explanation of the information, and you had to do your **homework** and **work hard** to prepare for the test. After I got my General license (WA4ZFP), I was having such a great time that two years turned into 29 years before I upgraded. ☺ Sorry to get off track, but I think it may be important to understand how things have changed and the **hard work and extra effort** it took back then to get an Amateur Radio License. I'll make the assumption that you are aware of what it takes to get an Amateur Radio License today in 2014 and I won't go into those details. But if you don't, it is an easy subject to look up on the Internet. OH, by the way we didn't have the Internet back then either.

Let's get back to when I was working on becoming a Novice Class operator.

Getting started:

So after understanding what I needed to learn to pass the code test, I took a 1 X 4 X 12 inch piece of wood from my dad's wood pile. I also found a small strip of aluminum about 4 inches long and about an inch wide and screwed it to the board and put a screw under the other end and bent the aluminum up so there was just a little bit of space between the bottom of the aluminum and that screw head. I then found a door bell buzzer in my dad's junk boxes and a 1.5 VDC battery to which I soldered wires to and hooked everything up in series. Happy Days, every time I touched the aluminum lever to the screw head, the doorbell buzzer would buzz! I was on my way now! I opened the "How to become a Novice" book and started memorizing the Dots and Dashes for each character. I didn't know it at the time, but I got started on the wrong foot and it would haunt me for many years.

Well I kept after it and kept reading the book over and over for years. By now you can imagine a young boy growing up in his teens and so many different things in the world to learn and do. So the scatter brain was in full force because I wanted to do everything. You know that old saying "Jack of all trades and master of none"! Well that was me. But I kept up my **hard work** (please note these key words!) learning the code (A - Z, 1 - 0, and Prosigns) and reading the theory part over and over. Yes, I did learn the code

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the wrong way and I learned how to count the dots and dashes in each character and number. But at 5 WPM it wasn't too bad. It can be done, but oh what problems occur later.

My Novice Station:

Well with no direction in learning the code and lots of practice building things, I slowly increased my library and made regen receivers, one tube transmitters and started to understand how all these tubes and other parts worked in a circuit. However, it wasn't until I was 18 years old in 1963 that I was in a mental state to take and pass the Novice test.

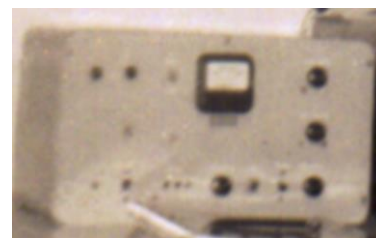
Somehow, and I really don't remember, but I wound up with a Globe Chief 90 transmitter from someone who repainted it and spent some time relabeling it, and it didn't look anything like the original as you can see, but it worked great.



Original

Globe Chief 90 Transmitter

Back then the Novice transmitters had a mark or red line on the meter face which limited the Novice operators to 75 watts input! Boy you couldn't go over that mark because you were not allowed to operate over that limit as a Novice. 😊 Again one of the things we did because it was the the right thing to do and it was the rule!



My Globe Chief 90

Later, my dad surprised me with a used Hallicrafters SX-71 receiver. WOW, I was set for big time radio work now! A general coverage dual conversion receiver (dual conversion was pretty hot stuff back then), with a separate window for tuning the Ham bands and it even had a Crystal Phasing control, which was great for reducing interfering signals. But the best filter was between the ears. You listened to a lot of heterodynes and other signals at the same time back then.



Hallicrafters SX-71 Receiver

For an antenna, I cut some 12 gauge solid brass house wire my dad had laying around to the dimensions for the center of the 40 meter band, added glass insulators at each end and in the center of the wire. I then ran 75 Ohm coax from the transmitter to the center insulator of the antenna, just like it showed in the book.

I put up some pipes my dad had laying around to hold up the ends of the antenna. Who needed to buy anything back then? My dad had a wealth of Ham radio stuff just lying around the house and didn't know it. For one side of the antenna, I mounted one pole to the eve of the house at the peak of the roof, and then ran the antenna from there, caddy-corner to another pole at the corner of the back yard on the other side of the house, and I was on the air! What is SWR? It wasn't in my vocabulary back then and the PI tuning network loaded up the transmitter to the Novice mark on the meter. So I was set.

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I did a lot of listening before I worked up the **courage** so I was not **embarrassed** (another key word) when I made that first QSO. As I think of it now many years later, **as a young boy I was never very good at anything and I didn't have any confidence in doing or knowing anything.** I think we're getting closer to an answer.

Breaking the Ice:

I remember that first QSO was a hum dinger! I don't remember the call sign of the station I worked, but it was written down in a log book somewhere in a pile of books in the book shelf, or even thrown away by now. But what I do remember is the sweat pouring down my forehead, the sweaty palms, and a shaky hand. After listening around the 40 meter Novice band which at that time was from 7.150 – 7.200 MHz; I sent a number of CQ's and listened around on the receiver. Back then all Novice transmitters were crystal controlled and if someone answered you, it would most likely be on a different frequency, so you would have to turn the dial to find them. I guess that's where the phrase "And Tuning" came from.

Well it finally happened; someone answered my CQ. I flipped the switch and sent the initial information. Like I said before, the sweet was flowing and the hand was a shaken. After I sent the information and turned it over to the other station I heard nothing! Oh no, what's wrong now? Well, back then the transmitter and receiver were separate and controlled by a transmit/receive switch, which I forgot to switch. ☺ After I finally realized it and through the switch, off we went to complete my first QSO. Oh what a relief it is, the ice was broken. From there, things went up hill pretty fast for me as my **ability, confidence, and skills grew.** My code speed increased quickly and I was able to not count dots and dashes anymore and started hearing a combination of short and long tones and recognizing characters. But I was still stuck with writing everything down, which I felt comfortable with for a very long time.



The Ham Fraternity:

I met other Novices in the area and we became close friends, and we helped each other to grow in our CW and operating skills. After six months we were all using bugs to help increase our speed. We hooked up wooden clothes pins on the weight screw on the swing arm of the bug to help slow down the dits. The bug at its slowest speed setting would send well above 20 WPM, and it was difficult to adjust because we didn't have the help of an Elmer at the time. Oh, and this was before the electronic Keyers. We were all learning from each other and doing the best we could. But we were young and had a life time to get it right. We thought we were doing great at the time, just like some bug operators today, but wound up having a bug swing in our



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sending. You know; those Dahs that are just a little bit longer than the recommended 3 to 1 ratio we learned using the straight key, and the uneven Dahs because we could never get the spacing right, and the rhythm of rolling our hand back and forth to configure the characters properly.

As I think back to my progress and how my activity increased, I noticed that the first QSO either on CW or Phone is the same for everyone today as it was for me back then. That's one thing I find consistent, but why is that? I am not a doctor of the mind, 😊 but I think most people **don't want other people to see them make a mistake and become embarrassed when they do**. Or maybe our **esteem** was not supported as youngsters and we had negative thoughts drummed into our head as we were growing up? Remember that TV advertisement many years ago that said "Don't let them see you sweat". I think there's a lot to that saying and people at any time, no matter when; **don't like to be embarrassed**.

Why I became an Avid CW Ham Operator:

Even though I was not working in early 1964, and was going to technical school (R.E.T.S. Electronics). I was so excited to get on the air every day and maybe too much because my studies suffered for it. Pay close attention to this next part! I am embarrassed to say this, but I have to, to get a grasp of the issues. As I was growing up, I was not the brightest rock in the pile as I implied earlier, and as a young boy I was one of those that would always be told: "Don't be Stupid!", "Dummy!", "You're never going to amount to anything!", "Egg Head!", "Meat Head!", or "That's stupid why did you do that!", and so on.

Sorry to peel the onion back so deep, but I know there are others out there that went through the same thing. Sometimes hearing these things from others gives comfort to those who may have suffered from these scars in their life. It's amazing as we get older we find ways of covering up or avoiding these scars and are very cautious to avoid situations where we might make a mistake and bring back some really bad memories or feelings of self-worth. Also, you know there are always those wolves and vultures, or whatever you want to call them that are poised or perched waiting for someone to make a mistake so they can pounce on them. The reason they do it is because they have the same scars and insecurities and they cover them up by becoming the bully. Strike first and "Don't let them see you sweat!"

But at that time, being able to send and receive CW at 20 plus WPM **gave me confidence, satisfaction, and I was comfortable in the fact I could do something to be proud of, and I never felt that way before**. Does this sound like an **esteem issue**? At this time the light bulb went on and I finally realized I had to get over the scars, because **I had worked very hard at everything to get it, and it was okay to make mistakes**. **Please read the next statement slowly and a few times! Making a mistake is not the problem! It's the recovery, and what you do to fix it, is what counts!** Once I understood that, and gained the **confidence and understanding**, everything seemed to be okay in life. It helped me in every aspect of my life and every job and thing I did. It taught me **I had to work very hard at everything** because nothing came easy to me **because of my baggage**. So I embraced it and applied the same approach in life and work as I did in learning Morse code, and after a while that was the way of life for me. I was able to do a lot in life and accomplish some great things in technology.

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Because of my many bad habits in the past in learning Morse code (CW), some habits still haunt me today especially when trying to copy CW in my head. I still haven't broken that habit, and the pen and paper is always close by. But I think at my age today, there may be other factors that are affecting my ability to remember it all. 😊

Answering the questions:

Okay, what is an Avid CW Ham Operator?

From my study, I believe an Avid CW Ham Operator is a person that has **found that inter security in CW operations** and just maybe **hearing the music**. **Or CW is one thing they feel really good about doing and just can't get enough, which it makes them feel good**. They would rather communicate in the language of CW to talk to other ham operators as their primary mode of Amateur Radio operation because of **some inner peace, satisfaction, pleasure, and feeling good about doing something or a driving force**, or maybe it's the **music they hear**, that keeps them using this mode?

The tough question:

So, what makes an Avid CW Ham Operator?

I believe what makes an Avid CW Ham Operator is that they have **found an inner peace or feeling or that something that gives them great enjoyment, satisfaction, and the drive to continuously do it**. You may not be aware of this, but communicating at 30 WPM makes the QSO move along just like you were using voice communications. And when it gets to conversational CW it's even better, because the conversation goes back and forth just like you're talking with another person sitting in the same room. Or maybe, it's the point where the words just roll off your finger and thumb without having to think of each character, and you hear words instead of individual characters (The Music).

There is also the aspect of CW contesting, which takes a little different ability in copying unnatural words called Call Signs, which is different than copying words. But to some, it's a **great satisfaction in participating in an event** and being able to **communicate at a high rate of speed**. Plus now days with the advent of the computer interfaced with a logging program and the radio, it is a single operator only situation that to some, **is right up their ally**. For the same reason they found **that inner something that they would rather do that feels comfortable and relaxing**, and gives them **great satisfaction** in hearing the music.

Conclusion of the Journey:

From looking back on my own experience, I believe in some situations it might also have to do with **esteem**, like in my case. You know that **something** that gives you **confidence in being able to do something well**, and **builds up a little pride in you**, and maybe doing **something that didn't come easy** and also maybe because of the **hard work** and the **accomplishment of being successful in doing something, and because you get to the point where you hear the music in CW and just can't stop doing it**. Or **realizing** if we approach life in the same way we did in learning CW, **we will be successful**. Or just maybe, knowing we're able to do something others may not be able to do in Amateur Radio because they

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haven't taken the **time to understand it takes hard work** and they need to **focus and push themselves**, or there're just too busy with the easy stuff and will never hear the music.

For those who struggle:

I admire all those people that don't have to work hard at learning things because most things come easy to them. They just do their reading and it clicks and they have it. Wow that's amazing to me. Then they take the test and they're on the air in Amateur Radio or anything else in their life. But it also saddens me that some may miss out on hearing the music, because of what it takes **to learn CW is not like reading a book and maybe it's not comfortable to them** and they might give up too easily. To some, if it doesn't come easy it's not worth doing. They really struggle with why it doesn't come easy and they get frustrated and close down. So they rather come up with answers like "I'm just not interested" or "I'm too busy and don't have the time" or some other answer. What's the real reason deep down inside? Is it that they just might have a little fault and don't want anyone to see it (I believe we all have faults and we are looking real deep now)? Does it sound familiar? Remember the **embarrassment thing** we discussed earlier and **making mistakes**. Or maybe it's having everything perfect. Perfection is a great goal, but having it as a controlling factor may cause some other challenges. So they come up with different answers. Do you think there just might be a little something getting in the way or a little **inner instability playing a bigger part**, or having to **work hard** to accomplish something is foreign to them and they always take the easy road?

But congratulations to those who have learned to look at it as a new adventure and overcome their inner "scars" (whatever the obstacles) to hear the music. They are richer for it.

Also congratulations to those who have found other areas in Amateur Radio that gives them **great satisfaction** and **comfort**, and like being an Avid CW Ham Operator, they are Avid Operators at some other modes of operations or activity in Amateur Radio.

For the Technician Class:

And for those Technician licensees who just got their licenses and may be thinking, Oh, I wonder what it's like to learn Morse code? To them, I recommend first taking advantage of the Tech privileges for a while, by getting over the Mic. fright of that first on air QSO. Then become competent and comfortable with the operating skills and knowing the proper way to conduct one's self on the air. But most of all have fun learning how to communicate in voice operations and become radioactive and enjoy 10 meters to work the world, and get involved in VHF/UHF communications. Then if a more worldly view is desired, upgrade to General and spend years learning all there is to know about Amateur Radio. Experiment in all the different modes, chase DX, learn about antennas and the basics of antenna building, QRP, and build something with your own hands and enjoy the thrill of using something you built. Do portable operations, contesting, participate in Field Day with the local radio club, and become proficient and knowledgeable in Amateur Radio. Then when you think you're ready for a bigger role in Amateur Radio then go for the Extra class license and put some experience and credence into the license level and take a proactive roll.

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Get involved as an Elmer in a specialty area or official capacity in a local club, or area or national representative. The only way this hobby will continue is with people getting involved and giving back of their God given gifts and talents. Then with the operating skills under the belt and more available frequencies, then think about learning a different language like CW. Because when this language is learned, it is not like reading a book and you have it. Oh no, it will require a **driving desire** for daily CW work and understanding it will be **a lot of hard work** to **learn** and **maintain**. After learning this language, will **require continuous usage** or **it will be lost!** All the sacrifice, time, hard work, struggles and overcoming hurdles would have been wasted. But with an upgrade, there are so many other modes to experience. If you enjoy using a Keyboard, there is PSK31, RTTY, and all the other digital modes to experiment with. Today CW is not a requirement for any Amateur Radio license in the U.S.A., and the new Ham should first focus on refining their operating skills and enjoy and understand the fundamentals of Amateur Radio. However, if there is this burning desire for CW, then by all means go for it!

If you think I'm way off base, then I challenge you to think about it, not just a quick thought that takes the easy way out. But really think about it deeply, and think out of the box to that uncomfortable zone and see what you really come up with. Can you break the "habit" that's keeping you from hearing the music once you understand what's holding you back?

It took me a roundabout way to get to my conclusion and a lot of deep thinking about myself, what I went through, my insecurities and hang ups, which was very uncomfortable and an eye opener to me. But I had to tell my own story to understand why I have become an AVID CW Ham Operator, and to understand some of the issues that may hold others back from hearing the music. Some people may think I am nuts by sharing my scars openly. But I am not embarrassed by it, because I have found that we learn by our mistakes and we don't have to be embarrassed by it. As Hams, aren't we suppose to share with each other our experiences; and would you think just maybe someone with the same challenges may take a chance because they see what someone else went through?

What's your reason for not becoming an AVID CW Ham Operator? Is your situation similar to mine, or are you one that took the journey, embraced the scars, and solved the "habit", and now hears the music? Or, are you one of those who didn't understand what was holding you back, and now has a better understands of what it takes and is willing to **overcome** the "habit" and **learn how to work hard** for something that will change your life.

To those that have found that something that gets them heavily involved in any of the other Amateur Radio activities, congratulations and keep up the great work and have fun! We appreciate your efforts in keeping Amateur Radio alive and well!

The final question:

Why do we need to know what makes an Avid CW Ham Operator?

As I mentioned before, I have asked lots of Avid CW Ham Operators these questions and found everyone struggles to answer the questions. However, I received one answer and they stated their brain works at

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the speed of CW. I guess that means they get tongue tied when they use the microphone and rather use CW. **Maybe it's deeper than just learning Morse code? Or maybe it's about really understanding ourselves so we can overcome anything and enjoy the riches awaiting us, or maybe the music.** As an Elmer and teacher of this unique language, I am trying to find that **common ground** so it may be explained to the new comer or Ole Timer (OT) that's been making excuses, so they can understand and become excited about CW as I am. This is my story, what's yours?

Encouragement:

With all that's available today for CW training and with an experienced and knowledgeable Elmer, CW may be learned the right way without all the pitfalls, and even in a relatively short period of time. But it does take **effort, hard work, and lots of it!** However, the Elmer's are aging rapidly and the knowledge they have in helping you to become successful without all the pitfalls are quickly changing. So take advantage of it now! Maybe you will experience the secret and be the next Elmer to help pass along the knowledge to others so they can also enjoy the music.

What can someone do to hear the music?

If you're a Technician, General, or Extra Class license holder and have a driving desire to learn CW, don't wait! **Sacrifice** the time **now** and do it! One good way to start is to go on the internet and go to the "CW Ops" web page. There is a section called "CW Academy". I recommend you go and sign up for a class. But you have to know the secret of an Avid CW Ham Operator to make it work, but wait! You just found the secret, so there shouldn't be anything holding you back! They have a program that is taught over the internet and it will start you out in Level 1 from zero to 16 to 20 WPM in 8 weeks. In Level 2, they will take you away from the pen and paper, up to 25 WPM and head copy. In Level 3, they take you into the stratosphere of CW at above 30 WPM to the music! Once this level is accomplished you will definitely know what makes an Avid CW Ham Operator and will be on your way to many years of CW music, and maybe become an Elmer to carry on this great mode of communication in Amateur Radio and be that special communicator when all other forms of communications fail.

Or ask the local radio club to put together a CW program so you too can learn the world of CW operations and hear the music.

Oh oh oh, if you already hear the music and want to give back to Amateur Radio, become a CW Elmer, and start a program in the local club. Remember it'll take the same hard work to teach CW Operations as it does to learn it. So get involved and if you want to learn a process check out the CW Ops web page and become a CW Academy advisor/Elmer and jump in and help in teaching their program.

With this training program you will be taught the right way to communicate in Morse code and shown the relaxed way to send using the latest equipment and technique, so you will start at a higher level with no pitfalls so you can grow very quickly in your newly acquired skills to hear the music.

What's an Avid CW Ham Operator?

After reading all of this, you're aware that it's really up to you, and what you want to accomplish, right! Any course and Elmer can only take you so far and the rest is up to you! What you do with it will make a difference in your life. Believe me!

Best Wishes:

Good luck in your CW adventure and I wish you the best in your endeavor with many happy days of CW operations. I hope you find CW to be as enjoyable, satisfying, exciting, and relaxing to use every day as I do, and that you find an Elmer, that will help you to become **an Avid CW Ham Operator**. ☺

73,

Bill, K5LN