

# Short Circuit



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## Arctic ARC Annual Flea Market & General Meeting!

The annual "move it from my garage to yours" chance to renew old acquaintances and maybe make a few new ones is coming soon. Saturday, September 12 at 9:00 am, the doors will open to the public at the Kiwanis Building at the Tanana Valley Fair Grounds on College Road in Fairbanks. Hams from all over the area are invited to bring goodies to sell or trade until about 6:00 pm. There is a small charge for tables and the club gets a percentage of the take.

Once the dust settles on the trading, there is a break to clean up the hall. A potluck dinner follows the cleanup. The general meeting after the potluck marks the last formal club meeting of the year prior to election of new officers. The evening concludes with a final sweepdown of the hall and the hauling away of many wonderful new goodies. Members, friends and fellow hams from other clubs, and the public at large are invited to come join the fun. Wear your name tags if you have them!



LEARNING THE CODE  
from Wigi Tozzi via Bitnet

I do not claim to be an expert. However, I do quite a bit of CW operation, and I also teach novice and upgrade courses, and give LOTS of amateur exams for two VEC's.

I have made the following observations about learning the code, and passing code tests. First and foremost, even though it is true that there is no person that cannot learn code, it is also true that people's ability to learn it varies widely from person to person. Some people just don't take to it as well as others. This should not discourage you, however, because even if code is difficult for you, there are several things you can do to enhance your score on tests, and to improve your copying in general.

On improving your copying...

I reached the twenty WPM (and, incidentally, thirty) plateau by USING THE CODE. If you are a novice or technician, set yourself a goal. You will not go to another test until you have worked all fifty states on CW. Or maybe 100 QSL's for CW contacts. If you do this, you will find two things. First, you'll find that as long as you press yourself to copy faster on the air, you will copy faster. Second, you will find that CW is fun. [You might find that you get through when band conditions are poor, when your general, advanced and extra friends up in the phone bands are getting 3 by 3 reports...]

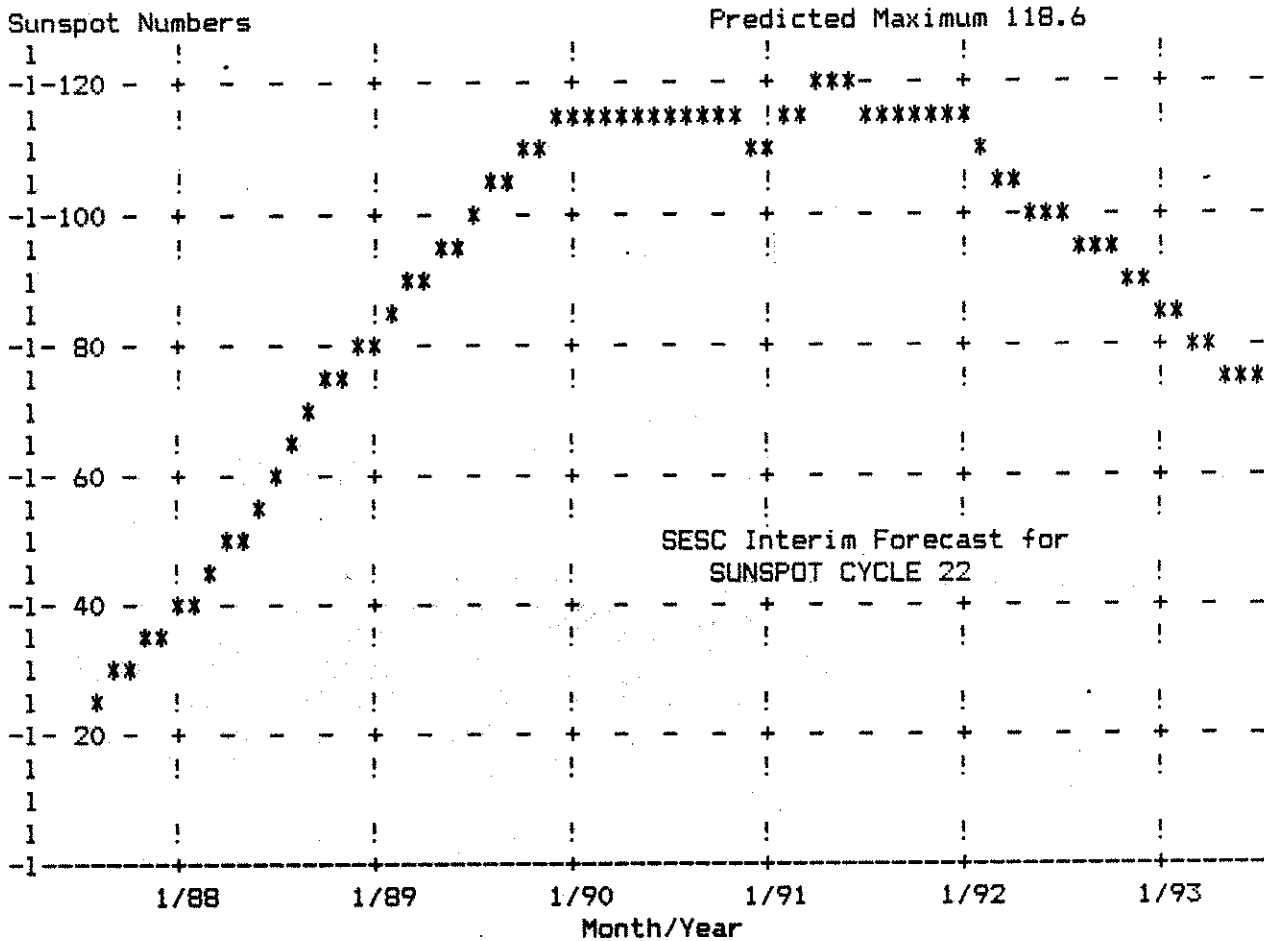
Unfortunately, I think there is an attitude problem in the ranks of the amateur community in this country. We are not "banishing" people to the CW bands when they pass their novice license. CW is a perfectly good mode of communication. There are people to talk to on the CW bands. Yet when one of my students takes three or four code tests in a semester, and fails them all, they respond that they haven't "practiced" enough. I think if you're "practicing" code, your approach is wrong. Why aren't these folks on the air? Probably because they feel that CW is a punishment... A purgatory, if you will. CW is not a punishment, but rather a gift. Learn to enjoy it, and then code proficiency will cease to be a problem.

On improving your score at the test...

I give LOTS of tests. I gave one today, and I'm giving one tomorrow. AL7GT passed element 1c today. I have administered all three of his last attempts at twenty WPM. On each of the three occasions, Roger missed four of the ten questions on the test. On each test, there was one wrong answer that was wrong by one character (missed, copied wrong, etc.). Talk about close! He was able to pass today because of a few little pointers that don't have too much to do with copying code, and a lot to do with taking tests.

SESC Interim Sunspot Cycle Forecast for Cycle 22 - dated 7/20/87  
from Wigi Tozzi and Don Rice via Bitnet

The predictions are based on the assumption that sunspot minimum occurred in September 1986. The prediction of maximum value of Sunspot Cycle 22 is based on the Ohl-method (as modified by Sargent in 1978). The values charted and tabulated are predicted smoothed monthly mean sunspot numbers for the designated months.



Month	SSN	Month	SSN	Month	SSN	Month	SSN
1/87	16.3	1/89	81.4	1/91	111.8	1/93	85.5
2/87	17.3	2/89	84.9	2/91	112.8	2/93	82.9
3/87	18.6	3/89	88.1	3/91	115.3	3/93	80.5
4/87	19.9	4/89	91.2	4/91	118.0	4/93	78.5
5/87	21.5	5/89	94.2	5/91	118.6 *	5/93	76.9
6/87	23.0	6/89	97.3	6/91	118.0	6/93	75.5
7/87	24.4	7/89	100.3	7/91	117.3	7/93	74.2
8/87	26.3	8/89	102.9	8/91	116.1	8/93	72.5
9/87	28.5	9/89	105.2	9/91	114.2	9/93	69.7
10/87	30.4	10/89	107.7	10/91	113.0	10/93	67.4
11/87	32.6	11/89	110.7	11/91	112.7	11/93	66.8
12/87	35.9	12/89	113.5	12/91	113.3	12/93	66.2

Month	SSN	Month	SSN	Month	SSN	Month	SSN
1/88	39.5	1/90	114.6	1/92	112.8	1/94	65.5
2/88	42.0	2/90	115.4	2/92	110.4	2/94	64.5
3/88	44.6	3/90	115.5	3/92	107.1	3/94	63.3
4/88	47.8	4/90	114.8	4/92	103.7	4/94	61.8
5/88	51.1	5/90	114.8	5/92	101.5	5/94	59.4
6/88	55.1	6/90	114.4	6/92	100.2	6/94	56.5
7/88	59.8	7/90	113.9	7/92	98.7	7/94	53.5
8/88	64.3	8/89	113.9	8/92	97.3	8/94	51.2
9/88	68.6	9/90	114.3	9/92	96.4	9/94	49.9
10/88	72.6	10/90	114.8	10/92	94.9	10/94	48.6
11/88	75.7	11/90	114.3	11/92	91.8	11/94	46.8
12/88	77.9	12/90	112.4	12/92	88.6	12/94	44.7

\* denotes maximum

#### Repeaters 146.37/97 Patch Use Extended

The Borealis ARC has approved opening the autopatch on 37/97 to members of the families of club members. Previously, the patch was available only to the individual member, not the family. This is a welcome change for those with multiple hams in the family. The repeater itself is open to any appropriately licensed ham. Only autopatch use is restricted.

#### New Repeater on 220 MHz

A new, privately owned repeater is being installed in early September by Steve Estes (KL7X0). This open repeater will be the first in the interior to be available to hams with NOVICE licenses. Operation will begin about September 8, under the call-sign AL7FG, on 223.28 input, 224.88 output. The repeater will be co-located with 146.28/88 on Ester Dome. A link between the two repeaters has been proposed, and is considered technically trivial. Such a link, under the new FCC rules, would permit novices using the 220 MHz machine to talk with other hams who are using the 146 MHz repeater.

#### Yukon 800 Marathon Jim Dixon, NL7HI

The Yukon 800 went smoothly this year except for minor problems like the "KL7B packet woodpecker". The real pleasure in organizing the Yukon 800 is that it virtually organizes itself. Whether you contributed your time or your equipment or both, you have been vitally important to the smooth and safe operation of this unique riverboat race. Thanks to all who contributed to the success of the Yukon 800 and hope to see you on the riverbank next year.

# WHAT'S NEW!

## Wigi's rules for code test taking

If you are a novice or technician, and you are shooting for 13 WPM, when you sign up for the test, sign up to upgrade to extra. The reason for this is twofold. First, if you should upgrade to general, you wouldn't want the availability of materials to keep you from trying the advanced test. Second, and most important, you want to hear the 20 WPM test. It's six minutes of practice at the test session that will really try your copying skills. And when the 13 WPM test comes along, you'll have had some practice, and you'll be amazed how slow it seems. There is a third reason to take the 20 WPM test... That is that you just might pass it. The night before my 20 WPM test I was copying the code practice from WIAW (bad approach on my part), with about 30 percent copy at 13 WPM. My father didn't think I had a prayer of passing 13, much less 20. But I did.

When you're taking the test, write down everything that you can, but also try to follow what is going on in the text of the message. When I teach the novice and upgrade classes, I slip one liners into the text of the tests and code practice I send in class. This way, I can tell who is following along in their head by who laughs at the punchline. I feel that copying in your head is very important, because when you get lost, you can use anticipation to get back in sync, and if you really black out, you may be able to reconstruct the chunks that you're missing, just by remembering the context of the message.

When the code ends, the examiners will hand out the test forms. If there is anything that you remember from the test; a string of numbers, a name, a place, a piece of equipment, weather, temperatures, etc. write them down in the margin of the copy sheet. Don't even look at the questions on the test yet. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, recopy the entire message, word for word. Fill in everything that you can. If you've zoned-out an entire sentence or two (and you're absolutely sure you've missed more than, say 10 characters in a row), look at the text of the message, figure out what might look good, and put it in. The idea here is that you want to totally reconstruct the message, word for word, as it was sent. After this is done, THEN answer the ten question test. Now, you have a relatively complete copy of the text to get your answers from, and second, you have the best possible guess at what the text was, so the examiners can go looking for the 25, 65 or 100 consecutive characters in the text, depending on what test you've taken.

Remember to read the stuff you copy. Try to make some sense of what you're seeing on the copy sheet. Use that information to help you piece everything together.

Code tests for those completely lost at 20 (or 13) WPM...

**is is is**  
**is is is**

THE SINGLE, MOST IMPORTANT WORD IN A CODE TEST IS "is". That's because the most important information in the text will follow the word "is". Learn to recognize "is" at very high speeds. When I took my 20 WPM test, my copy sheet was a list of 15 or 20 words which followed "is" It just so happened that they asked for seven of those words.

Even though the code test is ten questions, you can usually eliminate at least one, and usually two right away. Most, if not all code tests ask for one or both of the callsigns. Most, if not all code tests give the callsigns twice; once in the beginning, and again at the end. Concentrate, and copy them right the first time. Recognize that "DE" will separate the two. At the end of the message, when the callsigns are repeated, copy them just above the first set, then re-copy them at the end of the text when the tape ends. By copying the callsigns at the top of the page, if you missed a character the first time or copied it incorrectly, you can concentrate on that character, or chain of characters. Get the callsigns right. Guaranteed, they're on the test.

Finally, don't let your own nerves foil you on the test. For many, that one factor is the death knell. Relax. The best way to fight nerves is with confidence. If you feel that your CW skills are strong, and you're confident, you'll be able to win out over your nerves, and the test.

I think that's it. I hope it's of help. Once again, I'm not an expert on CW, but I think I'm an expert on code tests. If you learn to play the game right, you'll get there.

If I can be of any help, or if anyone has differing opinions, or supporting opinions, or additional opinions, I would be very happy to hear about them.

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## An Editorial Opinion

Frequency Coordination and Band Plans  
by Steve Estes (KL7XD) and Lewis Overton (NØSN)

Many of the repeater associations outside have been in a heated argument over the last few years regarding how to cope with allocation of what in many places is a very crowded 2-meter spectrum. The arguments have centered on the issue of how to space repeaters -- whether to adopt 15, 20, or 30 KHz spacing across the band. Alaska chose to avoid the contentions, since our repeater density permits us to do so. Alaska chose to adopt a 60 KHz spacing, permitting us to defer the issue of 15 vs. 20 separations until repeater density forced us to decide. The Alaska band plan was published in the September 1986 QST on page 75. This plan was the result of extensive discussion, was mentioned in the "FM/RPT" column of QST in 1985, and was a topic at the Anchorage ARC banquet in September of 1985.

Presumably, repeater coordination should inform prospective repeater owners of the band plan, recommend frequencies available in an area, and sanction only repeaters conforming to the band plan. Certainly neither coordination nor conformance to the plan is a requirement for new repeaters, but it would certainly help avoid future problems and dissension. The spectrum in Alaska isn't crowded today. It probably won't be tomorrow. But we are seeing more repeaters come in all the time. There is a lot of interest in better coverage, linking, and high-technology controllers. Sticking with the band plan would not seem to be difficult, especially if conformance is assured before the repeater goes on the air.

Unfortunately, the newest 2-meter repeater in Fairbanks doesn't fit the plan. It is 30 KHz away from a nearby, established machine, on a frequency associated with a pre-band plan, but long inactive repeater. While the new repeater is welcome, along with it's associated auto-patch, and not really causing any problems, the choice of frequency is unfortunate. If the repeater was coordinated through Anchorage, that doesn't seem to have helped in staying with the band plan. Perhaps it is time to reassert separate repeater coordination from the Anchorage group. With the distances and lack of crowding prevalent in Alaska, it seems silly to let repeater coordination be a divisive issue. Regional coordination instead of statewide would seem to be a reasonable solution, especially if the regional coordinators can cooperate.

### ARRL News

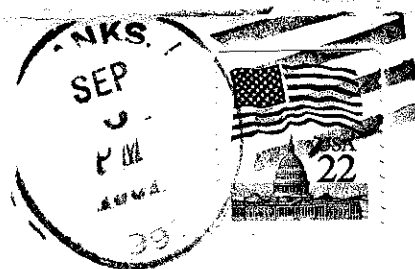
Dianne Marshall (AL7FG) has been nominated for ARRL Section Manager! Good luck, Dianne.

The ARRL Northwestern Division Manager, Rush Drake (W7RM), will be in Fairbanks, September 24. He will meet with the Arctic ARC board members and other interested people in the Globe Room of the Geophysical Institute at UAF at 7:00 pm. Contact Billy Connor (AL7FQ) for more information.

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