

President's Column

Thus far in my limited (10 year) ham radio career I have one CW contact to my name and I think that was a gift. I have played with, and struggled to learn Morse code off and on for the past 50 years. In 2024 my goal is to finally gain some proficiency. I know I will probably never become a speed demon but that is okay.

I have been, once again, going through the LCWO course but this time I am taking my time in moving from one lesson to the next. Instead of taking the approach that 90% is good enough to move on, I want to do better. I read an article the other day where the author said the thing that was holding people back in increasing code speed is that they hadn't learned the characters well enough for instant recognition. They have to think about what the character is rather than know what it is. I want to do it enough to just know the characters without thinking. Just practice, practice, practice. I have been told to just get on the air to improve. I would prefer that getting on the air not be a blood pressure rising, sweat inducing event. Been there, done that, not fun.

A second thing that I am concentrating on is letting go of the characters that I don't know almost automatically. If I have to stop and dwell on a missed character, I miss the next several ones. Not a good trade off, missing four to maybe gain one. For me, letting that character go is very hard to do. I am working on it.

What does my learning code have to do with KCARC? Ham radio is full of many different opportunities and modes. Try doing something different this year to keep your interest up. Check into the Delaware Traffic Net, do a parks on the air activation, participate in field day, learn a new skill like Morse code, check out one of the many digital modes like VARAChat (like ft8, but you can actually have a conversation), try SSTV, or even contact the ISS, but most of all – have fun.

73,

Jim KC3BTV
President KCARC