The True History of Morse Code
By Gregory Smith

This is an account of the partnership between Samuel Morse and Alfred Vail and his family. Morse had the vision to see the potential for electricity to play a role in communications, and the concept of the telegraph was rightfully his. However, Vail's family provided much of the financial backing to bring the concept to fruition, while Vail provided much of the engineering and the labor.

More to the point, however, is the system of dots and dashes which make up what is commonly called "Morse Code." This method, as it was eventually used by telegraphers and by CW operators to this day, is almost entirely the invention of Alfred Vail. Turn to page 8 for the full story!

CONTENTS

By Christopher Friesen

July 12, 1999, marked the day when coastal station KPH sent out the last commercial Morse code message from the United States. Dick Dillman was there to commemorate the heritage and tradition of commercial Morse stations and their operators: Denice Stoops was there to mourn the end of her career as the first female operator to be hired by KPH.

To their delight, Dillman and Stoops and many former operators are back at their positions, except now they are volunteering their time at common carrier coastal station KSM, preserving the equipment and tradition of KPH. If you log KSM when it's on air (you'll have to copy CW to get the ID), you'll get a QSL from Denice. If you call her the QSL Mistress in your reception report, you can be guaranteed a reply!

By Eric Bryan

There's more than one way to skin a cat, and if Radio France won't broadcast to North America in English, there's lots of English and streaming audio on their website. And on your cell phone. And on your satellite receiver or your local FM station... Despite all these options, it feels like RFI, among many other broadcasters, is trying to force us to the internet for international broadcasts. No doubt you'd be right.

Reviews

page 66

We all know technology marches on, but if you get a chance to try out the Perseus software defined radio, you'll be shocked at how far forward technology leapt when you weren't looking! Couched in this tiny package is a blazingly fast, versatile receiver that is ready to provide a universe of listening possibilities. (See First Look, page 66, for the review.)

With the Perseus' ability to record whole swaths of spectrum, you can keep listening to the same selection, each time "DXing" a different portion of the signal as if it were live. On the other hand, *Computers & Radio* reports on an amateur radio QSO that doesn't require a ham license or even any radio equipment at all!

Hamsphere takes place entirely over the internet, but it mimics the atmospheric conditions of shortwave and encourages the same operating procedures and etiquette as on-air operation. What better way to practice operation of your "receiver" and proper behavior with other "stations" from around the world?! (See page 70.)

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