

## Elmer's Corner – August 2024 by James Frank – KW5CW



The Intermediate CW Class Course has been completed. I want to thank the students that attended and made their way down to my home in Anna for the classes. The three students that made it through the class were **Cynthia VanSlogteren – K5EKA**, **Levent Kahveci – KB5TMU** and **Mark Miller – KA5TXN**. All three were also in the basic CW class earlier this year. They had to put up with me, and each week whenever they could attend, they were there.

Learning CW is not an easy task for most and the reason why most hams will not even attempt to learn it. The next class to be given will be the Advanced Class CW Course. The start date is TBA, but hams from other clubs are also interested in attending. None are interested in attending from the Sherman Club. With the summer heat and people on vacation, I may not have another class this year, and maybe wait for springtime next year if more interest builds. Also, there is interest in another Basic Class so keep tuned to find out what class is next and when, along with an online course.

In the world of CW, people communicate with each other in a mode that others think as antiquated, an old-fashioned way to communicate or trying to be just a nerd. From today's world and the direction in which the hobby is moving to other modes such as digital and satellite, it is understandable, especially with the no-code licenses out there, why there may be hesitation to learn. CW isn't for everyone. But how do you know if it's not for you if you haven't tried it? If the thought of working that mode bothers you, then stay away from it. Enjoy all the other modes that Amateur Radio has to bring. But if you just need to know, or are seriously considering the idea of learning CW, then you may want to take the next step and take a course. They will be offered again in the future. Hopefully by the September meeting, a venue and date and time will be determined for another in-person class.

Most likely in October, I will be providing an online CW course that you can take at your leisure, to learn CW from scratch up to 35 WPM. I have been putting a lot of time and effort into the creation of it, and I'm hoping that some from our club will take advantage of it. There are a few good CW online courses out there already and I've modeled mine from a combination of these courses to make my course easier to adapt to and to learn. It will be competitive in price, as there will be a fee, but it will be just one more way that you can learn CW in the time that you can make for yourselves in your daily routine.

Again, regarding in-person courses, it's been a constant learning experience for me to adapt to the students who take the course.

Almost everyone who attempts to learn CW using an online course most likely has already been exposed to CW, in a way that may hinder their learning abilities to continue learning. They reach that point in learning that absolutely prevents them from gaining more speed. Sometimes it's difficult to pick up where you left off in your learning journey, but that's what the course helps you do. You pick up your skills right where you are presently. No need to study the basics if you can already send and receive at 5-13 WPM. Modules will be added as they are perfected, to allow you to learn code and be able to copy at speeds up to 35 WPM.

Next year I will add contest modules, explain how contests work, and what you need to do to get involved in a contest and have fun. It includes preparation, operation and required information that is passed back and forth in specific contests, and the proper way to log your contacts as you work them. It also helps you transform from using a keyer paddle to a computer keyboard, using memories for specific responses in the contest. It's pretty mandatory that to be competitive in a CW contest, you will need to be able to receive at least 25 WPM, preferably up to 35 WPM. That is one reason why my course will take you to 35 WPM if you want to pursue it.

The students that attended my basic and intermediate CW in-person classes have that advantage. They know where they are with their skills in CW. You start the course at the point where you are having problems with code.

The main goals of the course mainly are three-fold.

First, learning the code.

Second, improve your skills in copying code, by increasing speed and using head-copy..

Third, apply what you learned in the course to real on-air contacts.

Morse Code is just another language but is not a common word language. It uses tones that are converted into letters and numbers. There are 26 letters in the alphabet, 10 numbers and 4 special characters that I teach. These are used in your every-day CW contacts.

More on the course/courses will be shared with you next month, but at least you know at this point something is coming and it's up to you to take advantage of it if you want to keep CW in your wheelhouse of experience with this hobby.

73 James – KW5CW