# kilobaud 

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Erich A. Pfeiffer
William L. Colsher
Jay Kuca
Thomas E. Hutchinson
James Gross
26 Raster Scan Graphics for the 6800 ... Part 1: the hardware
34 World of the Brass Pounders . . . receive Morse code the easy way
38 Kilobaud Klassroom ... No 14: parallel and serial I/O ports
46 Point of Sale/Inventory Control System for 8080s
50 Financier/Mortgage with Prepayment . . f from Instant Software
52 Hey, Kids! It's "Mickey Modem"' . . . not a toy
60 Do It with a Kimsi! . . KIM expansion the easy way
62 The Remarkable Apple-II . . . a fun machine, plus
67 Universal Number Converter . . . touches all bases
68 Hexadecimal Memory Dump ... painless
70 IC Testing ... a complete system
82 Music, Music and More Music .....  . it hath charms
84 Build a Serial-to-Parallel Converter ... a snap
9094 What Is a Bus? ... climb aboard for the answer98 Lucas' Puzzle ... solution can be tricky100 Home Brewing in Style . . . with solderless breadboarding108 Modify Your COSMAC Elf ... for a little pelf114 Loop the Loop ... iteration techniques explained

# World of the Brass Pounders: Receive Morse Code the Easy Way 

## Microcomputing and amateur radio make an exciting combination, if you haven't already discovered it. This Morse code reader is an excellent example of what we mean.

Agreat feature of a personal computing hobby is that it can be used to work with other hobbies. A case in point is this little program to decode and print out Morse code. I originally wrote this in machine language for my KIM system, where it took up less than one
page, and finally decided to try It in BASIC.
Even though the program looks simple, it has some unusual surprises, such as selfadaptlve adjustment for changes In code speed. In addition, the influence of changes in dash or dot length is weight-
ed so that they must occur five or six times in succession before the computer decides that there has been a bona fide speed change. As a result, an occasional "bad" character will not mess up your copy; the printout is extremely stable and the copy is relatively foolproof.

```
1 REM MORSE CODE READER - WRITTEN BY R. KURTZ - W6PR9
```

1 REM MORSE CODE READER - WRITTEN BY R. KURTZ - W6PR9
2 RESTORE
2 RESTORE
3 PRINT ChRS (26): REM CAN dELETE - PUTS CURSOR AT TOP OF PAGE
3 PRINT ChRS (26): REM CAN dELETE - PUTS CURSOR AT TOP OF PAGE
5 DIM AS(100)
5 DIM AS(100)
6 FOR N=1 TO 100:READ AS(N):NEXT N
6 FOR N=1 TO 100:READ AS(N):NEXT N
$10 \mathrm{~A}=\mathrm{PEEK}$ (5888) AND 1
$10 \mathrm{~A}=\mathrm{PEEK}$ (5888) AND 1
11 IF $A=1$ THEN 10
11 IF $A=1$ THEN 10
$15 \mathrm{~B}=0$
$15 \mathrm{~B}=0$
$20 \mathrm{~A}=\mathrm{PEEK}(5888)$ AND $1: \mathrm{B}=\mathrm{B}+10$
$20 \mathrm{~A}=\mathrm{PEEK}(5888)$ AND $1: \mathrm{B}=\mathrm{B}+10$
30 IF $A=1$ THEN $C=((5 * C)+(2 * B)) / 6: D O=2 * D O: D A=2 * D A: D O=D O+1:$ GOTO 100
30 IF $A=1$ THEN $C=((5 * C)+(2 * B)) / 6: D O=2 * D O: D A=2 * D A: D O=D O+1:$ GOTO 100
40 IF $B<(.5 * C)$ THEN 20
50
$D O=2 * D O: D A=2 * D A: D A=D A+1$
40 IF $B<(.5 * C)$ THEN 20
50
$D O=2 * D O: D A=2 * D A: D A=D A+1$
$\begin{array}{ll}40 & \text { IF } B<(.5 * C) \quad \text { THEN } 20 \\ 50 \\ D O=2 * D O: D A=2 * D A: D A=D A+1\end{array}$
$\begin{array}{ll}40 & \text { IF } B<(.5 * C) \quad \text { THEN } 20 \\ 50 \\ D O=2 * D O: D A=2 * D A: D A=D A+1\end{array}$
$69 \mathrm{~A}=\operatorname{PEEK}(5888)$ AND $1: B=B+10$
$69 \mathrm{~A}=\operatorname{PEEK}(5888)$ AND $1: B=B+10$
70 IF $\mathrm{A}=0$ THEN GOTO 60
70 IF $\mathrm{A}=0$ THEN GOTO 60
80 $\mathrm{C}=\left(\left(4^{*} \mathrm{C}\right)+\mathrm{B}\right) / 5$
80 $\mathrm{C}=\left(\left(4^{*} \mathrm{C}\right)+\mathrm{B}\right) / 5$
$100 \mathrm{~B}=0$
$100 \mathrm{~B}=0$
$110 A=\operatorname{PEEK}$ (5888) AND 1
$110 A=\operatorname{PEEK}$ (5888) AND 1
$111 \mathrm{~B}=\mathrm{B}+10$
$111 \mathrm{~B}=\mathrm{B}+10$
120 IF $A=0$ THEN GOTO 15
120 IF $A=0$ THEN GOTO 15
130 IF B<(.5*C) THEN GOTO 110
130 IF B<(.5*C) THEN GOTO 110
140 GOSUB 300
140 GOSUB 300
150 A=PEEK (5888) AND 1
150 A=PEEK (5888) AND 1
$151 \mathrm{~B}=\mathrm{B}+19$
$151 \mathrm{~B}=\mathrm{B}+19$
160 IF A=ø THEN GOTO 15
160 IF A=ø THEN GOTO 15
170 IF $\mathrm{B}<(2 * \mathrm{C})$ THEN GOTO 150
170 IF $\mathrm{B}<(2 * \mathrm{C})$ THEN GOTO 150
180 PRINT " "
180 PRINT " "

| 190 |
| :--- |
| 390 |
| GOTO 10 |


| 190 |
| :--- |
| 390 |
| GOTO 10 |

$300 \mathrm{DA}=\mathrm{DA} * 2$
$300 \mathrm{DA}=\mathrm{DA} * 2$
$310 \mathrm{D}=\mathrm{DA}+\mathrm{DO}$
$310 \mathrm{D}=\mathrm{DA}+\mathrm{DO}$
$330 \mathrm{IF} D>100$ THEN $D=100$
$330 \mathrm{IF} D>100$ THEN $D=100$
34 PRINT AS(D):
34 PRINT AS(D):
$350 \mathrm{DA}=\mathrm{D}: \mathrm{DO}=\mathrm{\theta}$
$350 \mathrm{DA}=\mathrm{D}: \mathrm{DO}=\mathrm{\theta}$
360 RETURN
360 RETURN
400 data e,t, I, A,N,M,S,U,R,W,D,K,G,O,H,V,F,-,L,-,P,J,B,X,C
400 data e,t, I, A,N,M,S,U,R,W,D,K,G,O,H,V,F,-,L,-,P,J,B,X,C
410 data $\mathrm{Y}, \mathrm{z}, \mathrm{Q},-,-, 5,4,-, 3,-,-,-, 2,-,-,-,-,-,-,-1,6,-, 1,-$
410 data $\mathrm{Y}, \mathrm{z}, \mathrm{Q},-,-, 5,4,-, 3,-,-,-, 2,-,-,-,-,-,-,-1,6,-, 1,-$
420 DATA $-,-,-,-, 7,-,-,-8,-, 9,0,-,-,-,-1,-,-1,-,-,-,-$, ?

```
420 DATA \(-,-,-,-, 7,-,-,-8,-, 9,0,-,-,-,-1,-,-1,-,-,-,-\), ?
```




Program listing.

The program also detects the end of the word and prints out a space, if required.

The program's memory needs are minor-just a little over 1 K of RAM is required. The program is written in Microsoft BASIC on the KIM computer, but should operate with any relatlvely fast BASIC. From a hardware standpoint, if your CRT or printer will go to 300 baud, this program will provide excellent copy of Morse code, up to 15 or 20 words per minute. If your terminal operates up to 1200 baud, it will follow the Morse transmissions to well over 30 words per minute.

## Loading the Program

Input the program exactly as written, even though some of the Instructions may seem redundant. It is written thls way to save operating time-a very important consideration when you are dealling with fast-acting dots and dashes.

Lines 10, 20, 60, 110 and 150 instruct a PEEK to location 5888 (decimal). In the KIM computer, thls is a peripheral input address at 1700 (hex). This location reads a total of eight Input ports as an elght-bit word.

The AND 1 on lines $10,20,60$, 110 and 150 assures that the computer is only reading the port to which the incoming Morse is connected. Obviously,


Fig. 1. Simplified flow diagram.
this must be changed to fit your particular system.

In addition, the program assumes that when a dot or a dash occurs, a logic 0 appears on the input port. This is in agreement with a "key down" shorting the Input port to ground, and also in agreement with the hardware interface circult described later. If your hookup provides a logic 1 during a dot and a dash, then lines $11,30,70,120$ and 160 must be changed so that all IF $A=1$ statements should read IF $A=0$, and vice versa.

## Program Description

Fig. 1 is a simplified flow diagram of the program. The initializatlon routine (iines 1 through 6) sets the lookup table that will permit the printout of the proper character. The program then waits for a key down to occur (IInes 10 and 11). The first part of the operating program (lines 20 through 80) measures the length of time that the key is down and compares this with the stored value for the length of a dash.

If the key is raised in less than one-half of the stored dash time, the computer writes a dot into the dot register (line 30 ) and goes to the second part of the operating program.

If the key remains down longer than one-half of the dash time, a dash is stored in
the dash register (iine 50), and the value of the dash time is updated with a one-to-four weighting (lline 80). This is accomplished by multiplying the old value of the dash time by four, adding the new value, and then dividing by five. As a result, the stored value of the dash time cannot change drasticaily from character to character, and the copy is not susceptible to errors from erratic sending habits.
The second part of the program (IInes 100 through 190) measures the length of time the key is up. If it's up less than one-half of the dash length, the program assumes that the character is not complete and no printout is provided (see lines 100 through 130). If the key is up longer, the program jumps to line 300 , the printcharacter subroutine. If the key is up longer than twice the dash length, the program assumes that a word is complete and a

EXAMPLE: $D=-\bullet$
Initial conditions: Dot register $=0$, Dash register $=0$.
First period: Input a dash.
2 times dash register $=2 \times 0=0$.
2 times dot register $=2 \times 0=0$.
Add 1 to dash register $=1+0=1$.
Summary: dash register $=1$, dot register $=0$.
Second period: Input a dot.
2 times dash register $=2 \times 1=2$.
2 times dot register $=2 \times 0=0$.
Add 1 to dot register $=1+0=1$.
Summary: dash register $=2$, dot register $=1$
Third period: Input a dot.
2 times dash register $=2 \times 2=4$.
2 times dot register $=2 \times 1=2$.
Add 1 to dot register $=1+2=3$.
Summary: dash register $=4$, dot register $=3$.
End of Character-determine lookup number for D.
2 times dash register $=2 \times 4=8$.
Add dot register and dash register $=8+3=11$.
Answer: $\mathrm{D}=11$.
Example 1.

1. If the input signal is a dash:
A. Double the values in the dot and dash registers.
B. Add 1 to the dash register (see line 50 ).
2. If the input signal is a dot:
A. Double the values in the dot and dash registers.
B. Add 1 to the dot register (see line 30).
3. If the character is complete:
A. Double the value in the dash register.
B. Add the dash and dot registers to obtain the lookup number.
C. Clear the dot and dash registers.

Table 1.
"space" is printed (lines 170 and 180).

## Lookup Table

The heart of the program is the aigorithm that counts the dots and dashes and develops a number used to look up the actual character to be printed. In other words, each combination of dots and dashes in Morse code has a discrete number that commands a given charac-
ter to be printed. This algorithm has three conditlons as listed in Table 1.

Steps 1 and 2 keep repeating until the character is complete. When the program detects a key-up period longer than onehalf of a dash length, It is assumed that the character is complete and step 3 is accomplished (fines 300 to 430). The manner In which the lookup number for the letter $D$ is


Fig. 2. Interface circuit.


Fig. 3. Circuit board.
formed is shown in Example 1.

## Interface Hardware

Fig. 2 shows a typical circuit for connecting your radio receiver to the computer. The NPN transistor is an R/C coupled audio amplifier connected to a type 567 phase-lock loop circuit. The free-running frequency of the phase-lock loop is set by the values of the
capacitor and resistor connected to pins 5 and 6 of the 567 , and is approximately 2000 Hz . The capacitors on pins 1 and 2 of the PLL adjust the bandwidth to about 100 Hz , and the LED serves as a tuning in-dicator-that is, it will start blinking when the signal is in the center of this narrow bandpass.
This circuit is compatible
with the program, as written, in that the output signal goes to a logic 0 when a dot or a dash occurs. The circuit shown is not my original idea, but has appeared in numerous publications; you may have your own favorite circuit that you would like to use. As long as you maintain the same output logic (a 0 for a dot or dash), there will be no problem.

Incidentally, the circuit has another unique application. Since it is only activated by audio signals over a fairly narrow band, it can also be used to key an audio oscillator set to any frequency desired. When Morse CW comes in amidst a jumble of other signals, the phase-lock loop picks out the signal you want and keys the audio oscillator ... and that is all you hear. A full-scale outline of the circuit board is shown in Fig. 3.

## Adjusting the Program

One of the advantages of
writing this program in BASIC Is the ease with which the computation constants can be changed. For instance, you may wish to experiment with different algorithms to detect whether a key-down signal is a a dot or a dash ... to take care of "swing-fisters." This can be accomplished easily by changing the factor in line 40 from $\left(.5^{*} \mathrm{C}\right)$ to $\left(.25^{*} \mathrm{C}\right)$ or $\left(.75^{*} \mathrm{C}\right)$. By the same token, the constants in lines 111 and 151 can be changed to provide more leeway for the formation of characters and spaces.

One final note for KIM users: The 9K Microsoft BASIC is excellent and may be obtained from Micro-Z Co., Box 2426, Rolling Hills CA, for $\$ 100$. In addition, a full kit of parts for the Interface circuit, circuit board, Morse-code reader listings in both BASIC and machine language, and instructions on how to connect it to an audio oscillator are available from Micro-Z Co. for $\$ 16.50$ postpaid.


MLAY CHESOS
MICROCHESS is the culmination of two years of chessplaying
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