

## OzarkCon 2008 Wacky Key Contest

The first annual OzarkCon Wacky Key Contest was held at OzarkCon 2008. The keys had to conform to only two requirements, they had to be able to key an oscillator and they had to be capable of sending code.

There were many entries and the event was considered a rousing success by any measure. The entries displayed a sense of fun, innovation, and no small amount of imagination, engineering and craftsmanship. Not to say evidence of rapid building techniques.

The clear-cut winner was the old Datsun Tailgate Key entered by Walter K5EST. Every one else came in 2<sup>nd</sup> place. Walter said he pulled it out of a ditch on his farm, and it took two days to clean it up.

The variety of designs was a hoot. Ranging from the huge (Walter's) to the tiny, Tom, N2UHC's duck call like oral actuator.

Walter's winner featured water pipe foam insulation "springs" and a heavy fist. It worked pretty well actually. WAØITP's entry was the "Ten Foot New-Ma-Tic" which was a leaf contact actuated by a can of compressed air through ten feet of clear tubing. Tom N9UHC's duck call was ingenious, he blew into the end of a pvc pipe to close a diaphragm switch. It was all anyone could do to call a 3x3 CQ, hi..

Another nicely done entry was an iambic computer mouse key. It was very well crafted, and was quite useable.

This was a very popular contest and the proof of the pudding was the large crowd surrounding the table, and playing with the keys whenever there was a break in the other activities.

The contest will be back next year and the designs will undoubtedly be mind-boggling, again..

As Jay Bromley, W5JAY, said afterward, "this does make me wonder what goes on inside the mind of the man that comes up with these concepts."

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