

The Harrisburg Chapter has benefitted greatly from the donation of a functional telegraph instrument display by the Morse Telegraph Club. It was placed in Harris Tower as a working example of this early means of communication on the railroad. We are indebted not only to Jim Wades, E.E. (International President of the Club), but also to chapter friend Abe Burnett for facilitating the donation and for expending many hours repairing and cleaning the display components.

On August 8, 2016, for the first time, the telegraph instruments were taken to their future home for a "fitting." The initial thought was to locate them on an oak desk donated by John Smith in place of two ATCS monitors. That particular desk had been rebuilt by a contractor to accommodate a keyboard and a tower-type computer. After some thought, it was decided to have a different oak table or desk made by the cabinetmaker specifically for the telegraph instruments. The donated instruments were assembled on the new table, just for "fitting" purposes. The collection includes a leg key, a 17-A sounder in a beautiful oak resonator, two 15-B Bunnell sounders, a nice Bunnell local sounder built on a large frame, a 150-ohm Bunnell goose-neck relay and a lovely oak jack box in pristine condition.

December 9, 2016 was something of a Red Letter Day for the installation at "HG" Harris Tower. The custom-made exhibit table had arrived, and a rush-rush hook-up of the instruments was desired. This was a special off-season opening. Time did not allow everything to be wired through the jack box, but the relay and the resonator sounder were in circuit and working off the interface and power supply also donated by Jim Wades. Now there will be clicking instruments of telegraph as the folks take the tour. The computer and the power supply/interface are located on special shelves built into the underside of the desk, and the keyboard will go in the desk drawer.

Since December, everything has been set up and operating through a Morse KOB circuit. Abe Burnett plans to do his regular Saturday afternoon wire meets from HG. This project would never have come together save for the interest, vision, enthusiasm and work of John Smith, Al DiCenso, Dan Rapak, Jim Wades and other kind, interested and supportive persons, including those who donated to the special fund to have the display desk built.

On a side note, the Chapter leadership became intrigued with telegraph after learning that Harris Tower had a genuine telegraph call of its own, "HG," painted on the model board when the tower was erected in 1929. It was discovered when the later "Harris" lettering on the model board was sanded off several years ago! Although the legal name of the tower on the property records is just "Harris Tower," the NRHS leadership has recognized the tower's historical, original office call by having the letters "HG" included on a new bronze plaque signifying its place on the National Register of Historic Places.