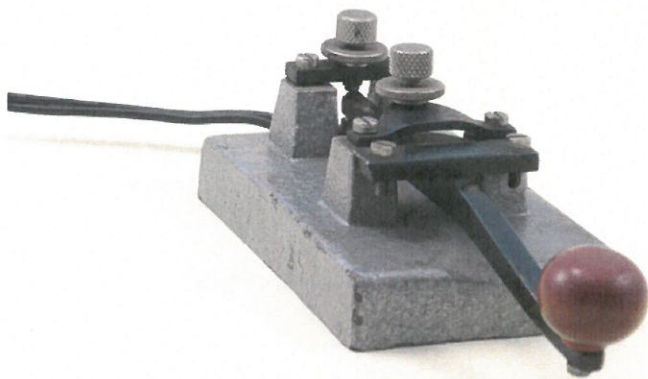


Science is our tool, not our scapegoat

We have no way of knowing if future generations will characterize the first twenty-five years of the twenty-first century as an age of enlightenment or a time of intellectual darkness. We do know that remarkable progress has been made in many scientific fields such as medicine, chemistry, engineering and a myriad of other technologies. Those advancements sift down to our daily lives in



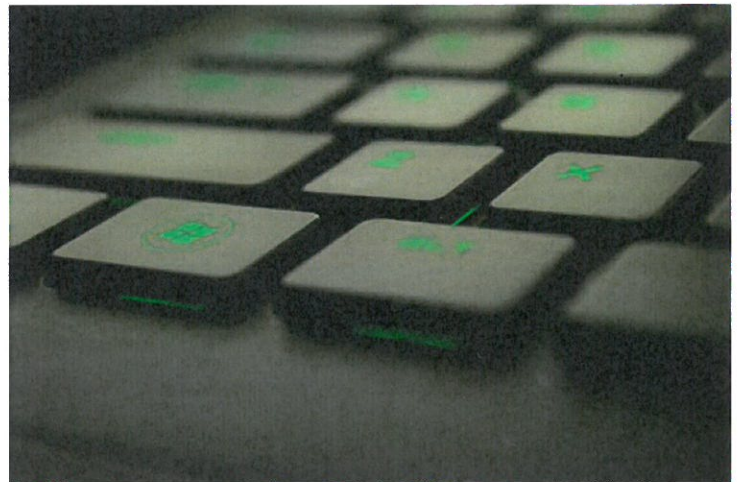
the form of improved methodology. The question that historians will ask, however, is what impact did those improvements have on our quality of life. Were people better equipped to handle life's challenges? Did they use their knowledge to help one another become better people?

When I was in the seventh grade, each of the upper grades, five through eight, were assigned a science project for parents' day which was a few weeks away. Our class, all of three boys and one girl, decided we would build a working telegraph between our two rooms (small school). We were determined to have a realistic installation complete with telegraph poles which were made out of old broom handles and scrap lumber. Our science book had detailed directions for constructing the telegraph key and sounder. We were good scavengers and found "unused" hardware in various junk sheds at our respective homes. We needed power, of course, to make the key and the sounder work. Flashlights in those days (sometime back in the 20th century) were equipped with "D" cell batteries. That was the only sized battery readily available and were merely called flashlight batteries. All four of us pilfered spare batteries from home. At some point we were ratted out, probably by the jealous eighth graders.

We were very proud of our accomplishment and were ex-

cited to demonstrate our telegraph on parents' day. We were even so bold as to invite one of the mothers to participate, to actually send an SOS to the other classroom. She refused. We insisted, but she just shook her head. We continued with our presentation including an explanation of how telegraph operators established their own identity by the way they operated the key. To this day I don't know why that mother would not participate. Perhaps she thought she would embarrass herself or she just didn't want to have anything to do with a science project. I have since realized that science is intimidating to many but we must remember that it only provides the means for change. People must decide how scientific results are implemented. Fortunately, telegraphs have served us well. The jury is still out on today's ubiquitous electronic gadgets.

The science of computer technology seems continually unlimited in its development of new hardware and sophisticated apps that could not even be imagined a generation ago. Still, there are those few who deny the advantages of computer use, while others enjoy the misuse of computers



from bullying on social media to hacking financial records for ill-gotten gain. How this will all play out is uncertain, but one thing is for sure: future generations will make the judgment that it was unscrupulous people who threatened the destruction of the Internet, not computing science. Martin Luther King succinctly illustrated mankind's dilemma when he said, "Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have guided missiles and misguided men."

Written by Ray Huss, Stewardship Committee Member