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WAVELENGTH

Official bulletin of
 Scarborough Amateur Radio Club, Inc.
www.ve3we.org

PARTICIPATE – LEARN – ENJOY

March 2010

Volume 4 Issue 3

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SARC Nets

28.730 Mhz
 CW 10:00 AM
 SSB 10:30 AM
 147.060 MHz (VE3RPT)
 7:30 PM
 Alternate frequency
 146.520 MHz simplex
 28.730 MHz
 SSB 7:00 PM

Everyone is invited to check in on CW before the nets start.

These are open nets. All licensed hams are welcome. Come and join us.

We also want to emphasize that 28.730 MHz is our calling frequency. Please monitor and/or call your friends. 7:00 PM is a good time.

SARC 64th Anniversary Night

April 26, 2010

Scarborough MS Walk

by Bob Chrysler VE3IEL

Once again our ARES group has been contacted by the Scarborough MS Society.

For quite a few years now our ARES group has provided marshaling and communications for this event. This year the Scarborough MS Walk takes place on April 18th. As usual the walk begins at Cedarbrae Collegiate and ends at Cedarbrae Collegiate after a 10 K jaunt through Thomson Park, and up to the Birkdale centre. The Scarborough Amateur Radio Club, as in the past, assists the regular ARES group with volunteers.

The MS Walk is a good exercise for us. It gives us a chance to test and evaluate our equipment. In some cases we learn things about our equipment we never expected. For example one year we suffered a lot of rain. A lot of older hand-helds do not like rain very much. Thankfully on that exercise it was our FRS equipment that saved the day. We also learned how to use garbage bags and sandwich bags as protective rain gear.

Due to the increasing use of cell phones, our communications will be supplemental. One advantage we do add though is a base station at the headquarters that everyone may listen to. Also we maintain somewhat of a radio party line that provides an easy way of keeping tabs on things as they happen.

For our MS exercise we maintain a roll-call form of traffic handling. This may seem very odd to some people; however, our ARES members should be used to this as this is the form that is practiced every day on the ARES 6 PM Nets. The advantage of this style is that not everyone is trying to communicate at the same time. Here you give a report when you are called. As it happens it does not take long for a picture to develop, as to the progress of the whole event. Communicators are not doubling with each other; and, the whole thing sounds professional.

Another thing that we try to avoid is testing our radios during the event. Testing should be done long before an exercise like this takes place. How often have we heard operators checking high power, low power, medium power, different battery battery packs and so forth when this should have all been done long before hand. The trick is to use your best battery configuration; and, for the exercise, start and then leave your hand-helds on high power; that is usually only 5 watts anyway. We are there to provide communications, not to play radio.

For this exercise please bring your cameras. It is often only us that use our positions to take pictures as a record for us and the MS Society. By all means bring your cell phones and spare FRS/GMRS equipment as you see fit. If an unlicensed friend is helping out, they then are not out of the communications loop. These units are also good for side chatter, rather than having it loudly broadcast at the headquarters station.

For us the sign in time is 8:30 AM at Cedarbrae Collegiate or at your assigned position if that is more convenient. The MS Society provides a light lunch following the event.

One final thing, we are there to help them. We have no special authority. We do not give orders. We may offer suggestions in a friendly way. We should not get upset if we are not listened to. Oh yes, of course we do not own the frequencies that we may be using. Other radio amateurs may wish to break in for communications at any time. It is up to the headquarters operator, or the site manager, to explain to breakers what we are doing. If the breaker persists there is always alternate frequencies that we may use if we have to. We have no authority to prevent another radio amateur from using a frequency. Malicious interference is another matter.

We members of the Scarborough Amateur Radio Club have more experience in handling public service events than most other organizations in this area, including sometimes the organizers.

Let us show a smiling cooperation. We get invited to these events only because of the way we perform.

If you wish to volunteer this year, please contact me at: ve3iel@rac.ca.

Already some volunteers have come forward.

Yours, Bob VE3IEL...73.

Hamfests and Flea Markets

Courtesy of RAC

Ham-Ex

Sponsored by: Peel ARC & Mississauga ARC

Date/time: Saturday, March 27, 2010. Vendors at 7 AM, Exhibits and demonstrations at 8 AM, Public flea market 9 AM – 1 PM

Location: Brampton Fair Grounds, Heart Lake Rd north of Mayfield Rd

Admission: \$6

Talk-in: VE3PRC 146.880 (-) no tone, VE3MIS 145.430 (-) tone 103.5 Hz

Website: <http://www.ham-ex.ca/>

Durham Region Hamfest (34th Annual)

Sponsored by: North Shore ARC & South Pickering ARC

Date/time: Saturday, April 17, 2010. Vendors 7:30 AM, Public 9 AM – 1 PM

Location: Iroquois Park Recreation Centre, 500 Victoria St W, Whitby, Ontario

Admission: \$6

Talk-in: VE3SPA 147.375 (+) no tone

Website: <http://drhamfest.tripod.com/>

A Beginner's Guide to Making CW Contacts (Part 3)

by Jack Wagoner WB8FSV

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Editor's note: This guide was written several years ago, so some references may be out of date, but the general principles are the same. This month we present the third part of the guide.

What Do You Talk About? The Art of Rag Chewing

Now that you have established contact with another ham via CW, what the heck do you talk about? Every ham contact, CW or phone, consists of at least three basic items: your name, your location or QTH, and a signal report(RST) for the other station. What order you send these three items is unimportant, although commonly today you will hear signal report/location/name. When I started in ham radio 30 years ago, the order was almost always signal report/name/location.

The Standard name/location/RST/73 QSO

These three items are the essential minimum required for a QSO. While it is true that in working a DX station in a pileup you may only exchange callsigns and a signal report, in a "real" contact the name/location/RST are standard, and you continue from there. The next most commonly discussed subjects in CW QSOs are usually the weather(WX), the radio equipment people are using, the hams' ages and how long they have been hams. For many CW contacts that will be the extent of the contact. The other ham will sign off and end the contact. Most likely because the other ham is new to CW conversation making, and simply doesn't know what else to say. Or perhaps the short-winded ham isn't into making conversation. Personally I enjoy longer CW contacts, called "rag chews".

QSO Template for Beginners

When first starting out on CW, many new hams will often use a template or model, to make sure they send all the essential information. For example:

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" _____ de WB8FSV TNX FER CALL BT MY NAME IS JACK JACK BT QTH IS HILLIARD, OH HILLIARD, OH BT UR RST IS ___ BT HW COPY?"
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And perhaps on your second transmission:

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" _____ de WB8FSV TNX _____(name) FOR NICE REPORT BT MY RIG IS A KNWD TS 450 ANT IS A DIPOLE BT WX IS _____ TEMP IS ___ BT HW COPY?"
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Just fill in the blanks to fit the QSO, inserting your own callsign, name, QTH, and rig. And go on from there as a starting point if you choose. By the way, that strange BT is used in CW as a spacer, a device to separate your thoughts. Some folks will use a period instead. BT is sent in CW as (dah dit dit dit dah). The CW letters B and T sent together.

I feel that a more professional CW technique is to limit the amount of punctuation used during a QSO. Some new hams may send four or five BTs in a row while they think about what they will send next. One or two BTs in a row should be enough. Here is what I mean by limiting punctuation, "TNX DAVE

UR RST IS 579 579 MY NAME IS JACK JACK ES MY QTH IS HILLIARD, OH HILLIARD, OH BT HW? N1XYZ de WB8FSV K". There, I got away with using just one BT.

Other Stuff to Talk About

For some beginning hams, and for some experienced hams too, that is all the information they will willingly send to you. You may have to draw out more conversation from them. Kinda like pulling teeth. HI . When I work a new ham on CW I often end each of my transmissions with a question to give the other guy(or girl) something to talk about, to draw them into a conversation. For example, "How many states have you worked? Any DX?" or "Is it raining at your QTH also?" If the other ham mentions something such as their age and how long they have been a ham, you can take that as a hint they would like you to send them back the same information about yourself.

If you live in a small town, describe where it is in relation to a much larger city. Does the area where you live have any unusual characteristics that other hams might find interesting? I often tell other hams that I live on the edge of town - two blocks from cornfields. Or that central Ohio is a flat as a pancake due to glaciers scraping it level 15,000 years ago. Or that Hilliard is Ohio's fastest growing city. What is your town's population? Any famous or semi-famous people born there(besides yourself)? How large is your yard? Where is your radio shack located in your house?

Over the years I have developed a number of topics that I may bring into a CW contact in order to keep the conversation going. Even for me sometimes I just run into a wall, my mind goes blank, and I can't think of what to send next, so these commonly used topics of mine can come to the rescue at times. For example, I'll describe how my cat Rasta often naps on top of my TS 450 rig and I believe that after all these years I suspect my cat understands CW. Or I'll describe what I see at that moment out my basement window. Or talk about how I enjoy collecting stuff(stamps, baseball cards, radios, QSL cards). Or ask the other ham if they have access to the Internet to see if we share a common interest about computers.

I try to send the name of the other ham I am in contact with at least once during each of my transmissions. This frequent use of the other person's name makes for a friendlier QSO and tells them you care who they are. Don't get carried away with this personalizing your comments. Using the other ham's name once per transmission is enough.

When you first start out, any CW contact is fun. It's cool to see how far your equipment will reach, how many states you are able to work. After you have made a number of CW contacts you may discover that the best contacts are those that are different. Not the standard name/location/RST/rig/WX/age/73 type of contact. You may meet another ham who just loves to gab(like me) or who is involved in a different ham activity(such as satellite or packet) and would love to tell you about it, or another ham who may have a lot in common with you such as age, work, or other hobbies. One of the fascinating things for me about making ham radio contacts is you don't know what the other ham is like or how the conversation will develop until you begin.

DX News

QST de W1AW
DX Bulletin 11 ARLD011
From ARRL Headquarters
Newington CT March 18, 2010
To all radio amateurs

This week's bulletin was made possible with information provided by NC1L, The Daily DX, QRZ DX, the OPDX Bulletin, DXNL, LNDX, Contest Corral from QST and the ARRL Contest Calendar and WA7BNM web sites. Thanks to all.

AZERBAIJAN, 4J. Operator 4J0WFF will be QRV from the National Reserve "Yanar Dagh" Burning Hill from March 20 for at least three days. Activity will be on 40 to 10 meters, including the newer bands, using CW, SSB and PSK31. QSL via operator's instructions.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC CONGO, 9Q. Anton, ON6NL and Henk, ON4AHF are working for the organization "Doctors Without Borders" and are active using club calls 9Q0AR/6 and 9Q0HQ until March 22. Activity is on all bands using CW and SSB. QSL 9Q0AR/6 via ON6NL and 9Q0HQ via ON4AHF for this operation only.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, A6. Operator RV6AJJ will be QRV as A65CA in the Russian DX contest as a Single Op/All band entry. QSL via operator's instructions.

ANGOLA, D2. Vasilij, D2QMN will be QRV as a Single Op/Low Power entry in the Russian DX contest. Activity is on 40 to 10 meters. QSL via RZ3EC.

SOUTH COOK ISLANDS, E5. Tim, NL8F will be QRV as E51COF from Rarotonga, IOTA OC-013, from March 20 to 30. This includes an entry in the upcoming CQ WW WPX SSB contest. QSL via K8NA.

IRELAND, EI. Olivier, ON4EI will be QRV as EJ8GQB from Bere Island, IOTA EU-121, from March 21 to 29. Activity will be on 160 to 10 meters using SSB and RTTY. QSL to home call.

MARTINIQUE, FM. Alain, F6BFH and Serge, F6AUS will be QRV as TO5SM/p from Tintamarre Island, IOTA NA-199, on March 21. Activity will be on 20 and 17 meters using CW and SSB. QSL via F6BFH.

HAITI, HH. Operators Jan, K4QD and Don, AF4Z will be QRV as HH4/home calls from the Northwest Haiti Christian Mission from March 22 to April 2. Activity will be on 160 to 10 meters using CW, SSB and RTTY as time and the availability of AC power permits. This includes being active along with HH2JR and the Radio Club of Haiti in the upcoming CQ WW WPX SSB contest. QSL to home calls.

MARIANA ISLANDS, KH0. Yoshi, JE2EHP will be QRV as K1HP/KH0 from Saipan, IOTA OC-086, from March 21 to 25. Activity will be on the HF bands plus 6 meters, using CW, SSB and RTTY. QSL to home call.

BONAIRE, CURACAO, PJ2. Michal, OK7MT and Vit, OK5MM are QRV as PJ4/home calls from Bonaire, IOTA SA-006, until April 1. This includes being an entry in the Russian DX contest and also as PJ4L in the upcoming CQ WW WPX SSB contest. QSL direct to home calls.

SEYCHELLES, S7. Gav, GM0GAV and Rob, GM3YTS will be QRV as S79GM from March 21 to April 1. Activity will be on the low HF bands using CW and possibly RTTY. QSL via operators' instructions.

EAST KIRIBATI, T32. Operators Steve, 9M6DXX, Derek, G3KHZ, Steve, G4EDG and Mike, K9AJ will be QRV as T32MI from Malden Island, IOTA OC-279, T32SI from Starbuck Island, IOTA OC-280, T32CI from Caroline Island, IOTA OC-281 and T32VI from Vostok Island, IOTA OC-282. Activity will be on 40 to 10 meters using CW and SSB with four stations activity on each island. QSL all calls direct via SM6CAS.

TOKELAU, ZK3. Operators Bill, N7OU and Bob, W7YAQ are QRV as ZK3OU and ZK3YA, respectively, from Nukunonu, IOTA OC-048, until March 25. Activity is on 160 to 10 meters using CW, SSB and RTTY. QSL to home calls.

THIS WEEKEND ON THE RADIO. The 10-10 International Mobile Contest, BARTG HF RTTY Contest, NCCC Sprint, SARL VHF/UHF Analogue Contest, Russian DX Contest, Oklahoma QSO Party, AGCW VHF/UHF Contest, North Dakota QSO Party, Virginia QSO Party and the 9K 15-Meter Contest are all on tap for this weekend. The Run for the Bacon QRP CW Contest is scheduled for March 22. The SKCC CW Sprint is scheduled for March 24. Please see March QST, page 78, and the ARRL and WA7BNM contest web sites for details.