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WAVELENGTH

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

PARTICIPATE – LEARN – ENJOY

September 2010

Volume 4 Issue 7

President: Bernadine Dinnard-Williams VE3YDB Sunday
 Vice-President: Ralph Muecke VE3VXY Tuesday
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 Secretary/Treasurer
 :
 Archives: Gord Hogarth VE3CNA
 Audrey Little VA3YD
 Elmer: Rod Long VE3SOY
 Nick Blacklock VE3EBC

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.

Meetings and Tech Nights

We normally meet on the 2nd and 4th Monday of the month from September to June (except statutory holidays). This year we're planning to add some informal meetings on the alternate Mondays when we don't have a regular meeting. Watch for announcements on our website, <http://ve3we.org/>

Our meeting place is the Seniors Lounge on the upper level of the Don Montgomery Community Recreation Centre, 2467 Eglinton Avenue East (adjacent to Kennedy subway/RT/GO station). Meetings start at 7 PM.

Classes/tech nights are every Friday night from 7 to 9 PM at the same location.

Radio History Website

Gord Hogarth VE3CNA is our club archivist. Recently he has set up a personal website called "Some organizations of Canadian Amateur Radio History". This site traces the development of the amateur radio hobby in Canada through various organizations and publications from the past.

So far, the site covers the following topics:

- Canadian Amateur Radio Operators Association (earlier known as the VE Operators' Association) – publishers of XTAL magazine
- The Ontario Trilliums
- Radio Experimenters of Canada
- Radio Society of Ontario, Inc.
- Skywire (private publication, not affiliated with any organization)
- Wireless Association of Ontario

The site address is <http://onradiohistory.ve3we.org/>

The publications are in PDF format for easy reading and printing. Unfortunately, since they were scanned from paper, these PDF files are not suitable for use with screen readers.

If you have any other historical material that you think might be of interest, please contact Gord.

CQ Amateur Radio Magazine

Gord also passed along a link to the archives of CQ Amateur Radio magazine. You can go to <http://cq-amateur-radio.com/> and click on **Back Issues > Search the Archive** or go directly to <http://hamcall.net/cq>

The archive includes all issues of CQ back to 1945 except for the most recent 24 months.

SARC and TFMCS

Several members of the Scarborough Amateur Radio Club and the Toronto FM Communications Society met informally in late August to discuss ways to share resources. SARC does not currently have a repeater of its own, and for the past several years, we have been using the VE3RPT repeater for our Tuesday evening 2-metre nets.

TFMCS is primarily a technical group, and some of their members have been asking for more social events in addition to the annual general meeting/picnic. SARC has also been looking for a way to set up its own repeater for local use.

SARC and TFMCS have a long history of co-operation. Many of our members also belong to TFMCS.

As of September, the following three SARC members have been named to the TFMCS Board of Directors:

- Ralph Muecke VE3VXY
- Nick Blacklock VE3EBC
- Lambert Philadelphia VE3LYP



One of the Dumbest Things I've Ever Done in Ham Radio

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

Mark, W8MP, and I often argue about what's dumber—his county hunting or my collecting QSL cards from stations whose call signs spell words. It's one of those arguments that will never be won. When you get right down to it, they're both pretty dumb.

Well, one Wednesday morning, I got a call from Mark. He asked, "Hey, want to do something really dumb tonight?" When I asked what he had in mind, he replied, "Well, one of my county hunter friends, Tim, W8JJ, claims to have confirmed all 3,077 counties. He needs at least two General Class (or higher) hams to check his QSL cards and sign off on his application for the USA-CA award sponsored by CQ magazine. I guarantee that this will be one of the dumbest things that you ever do in ham radio. I also guarantee that it will be a lot of fun."

After a fine salmon dinner with some very chewy noodles (that Mark claims his son, KD8EEH insisted that he make), we cleared the table, and Tim got out his box of cards. Mark then explained how we should proceed. I was kind of curious about this, as it's clearly impossible to check all 3,077 QSOs in a single evening.

Basically, what the two checkers are supposed to do is to check random contacts until they are satisfied that the applicant does indeed have a QSL from all 3,077 counties. To select the contacts, you might choose counties where you lived, or counties that you have visited. I hit on the idea of having Tim

produced the confirmations of all 16 counties in Massachusetts. Clark, who is more familiar with which counties are the most difficult to confirm, asked Tim to produce cards from some rare counties in Colorado and Hawaii.

Above all, though, the idea is to give the applicant as much grief as possible during the process.

Mark came up with the idea of calling several county hunters that he had phone numbers for and asking them to verify in their logs some of the QSOs that Tim was claiming. He first phoned Jim, N9JF, and we asked him about a 44 report that he'd given Tim seven years ago. He wasn't near his logbook, but he said that he did remember that contact and even rattled off the county (Wahkiakum, WA)!

Next, Mark phoned Guff, KS5A, who confirmed a contact, but was off by almost seven minutes. A long discussion ensued regarding the details of how a mobile logs contacts while out driving. In the end, we accepted the seven-minute discrepancy.

Finally, Mark phoned Larry, W0QE, to confirm a few of the MRCs that Tim had from him. (MRCs are records of multiple contacts. Using them instead of QSL cards makes the process of managing all these QSLs a lot easier.) Mark joked that it looked like one of the MRCs had a forged signature. Larry replied that all of his MRCs are stamped.

"Aha," Clark exclaimed, "this MRC doesn't have a stamp!"

I don't know what was going through Tim's mind at this point, but it probably wasn't good. Larry then explained that he probably sent out that MRC before he got the stamp. When we confirmed those dates, I think Tim breathed a little easier.

In the end, Clark and I signed off on Tim's application. And, even though Mark and I joke about how dumb this activity is, it's really only a joke. In my mind, it's quite an achievement. It takes a lot of persistence, too. It took Tim nearly ten years to do it.

Another cool thing about the county hunting sub-culture is the camaraderie amongst the county hunters. It's the nature of the beast that you'll be contacting many of them multiple times, and it's inevitable that you'll make friends with many of them.

As we were leaving, Tim said, "My wife asked me the other day if I could get now get rid of all my radios since I've talked to everybody." She obviously doesn't understand this ham radio sub-culture. Tim's only just begun.

You can keep up with all of Dan's dumb ham radio activities by reading his blog at www.kb6nu.com. When Dan's not doing dumb ham radio things, he programs websites and does community-service type stuff as a member of the Ann Arbor (MI, USA) Rotary Club. You can email him at cwgeek@kb6nu.com.

Propagation Forecast Bulletin

From Tad Cook, K7RA
Seattle, WA September 24, 2010
To all radio amateurs

SB PROP ARL ARLP038
ARLP038 Propagation de K7RA

The autumnal equinox occurred early yesterday, at 0309 UTC on September 23.

Conditions were good this week, with sunspots visible every day, and very little geomagnetic activity. Average daily sunspot numbers rose more than 24 points to 40, and average daily solar flux was up nearly five points to 82.9. Solar flux was expected to rise to 88 for September 23-27, but instead it was 84.3 on September 23, and now the forecast for September 24-28 is solar flux three points lower, 85. For September 29-October 5 the solar flux forecast is 84, 82, 82, 82, 80, 78 and 76.

Planetary A index for September 24-30 is predicted to be 10, 7, 5, 5, 7, 8 and 5. Geophysical Institute Prague predicts quiet to unsettled conditions on September 24, quiet conditions September 25-27, quiet to unsettled September 28, and quiet again on September 29-30.

Bill Magruder, KD7KST sent in an interesting link showing live aurora from Yellowknife in Canada's Northwest Territories, which is at 62.433 degrees north latitude. Go to <http://snipurl.com/15tszs> and have a look, after dark, of course. This weekend sun sets in Yellowknife around 0125z and sunrise is at 1334z.

Alfio Bonanno, IT9EJW in Italy operates a 10-meter beacon on 28.226 MHz. He reports that for the first time since the beacon was put on the air in 2008, it was heard outside Europe. LW3EX in Buenos Aires, Argentina copied it at 1647z on September 15. Information on the beacon is at <http://www.it9ejw.it/beacon.htm>.

WorldRadio online has a new monthly propagation column from Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA, this time with his observations about the rise time for solar cycles compared to the current cycle 24. You can find it at <http://www.worldradiomagazine.com/>.

Dave Ripton, K6SIX of Morris Plains, New Jersey commented about a recent question concerning TVI on six meters. Dave wrote, "In this week's bulletin you mentioned the improvement in 6M TVI. We have to thank the cable, satellite, and fiber optics companies for the reduction in 6M TVI. In my Northern NJ area, roof top TV antennas are rare and the ones that are there are rusted-out so I expect they are no longer used. With Channel 2 gone even indoor 'rabbit ears' are no longer a problem. Also telephone RFI has dropped thanks to the new wireless phone bands. With all the new rigs that included 6M it is a great band for newcomers as well as 6M nuts like myself. Now all we need is some F2 to really bring 6M's back to life".

John Ragle, W1ZI of Hadley, Massachusetts wrote "I run 350 watts (peak) output on 50 MHz to a 5 element beam about 30 feet up and about 50 or 60 feet from our house and a neighbor's house. The TV and Internet cable come in on underground fiber optic, and cross the street underground as double-shielded coax. The run from the sill junction box on the house to the interior of the house is with ordinary single-shield coax. I also run about 350 watts (peak) on 2 meters and 90 watts on 70 cm, as well as 100 watts on HF. There is not the slightest hint of TVI in either location...although my wife's sound system (her computer sound card is hooked to an FM radio's audio in) picks up some crackle from the modulation peaks in the 2 meter band".

If you would like to make a comment or have a tip for our readers, email the author at, k7ra@arrl.net.

For more information concerning radio propagation, see the ARRL Technical Information Service at <http://arrl.org/propagation-of-rf-signals>. For an explanation of the numbers used in this bulletin, see <http://arrl.org/the-sun-the-earth-the-ionosphere>. An archive of past propagation bulletins is at <http://arrl.org/w1aw-bulletins-archive-propagation>. Find more good information and tutorials on propagation at <http://mysite.ncnetwork.net/k9la/index.html>.

Monthly propagation charts between four USA regions and twelve overseas locations are at

<http://arrl.org/propagation>.

Instructions for starting or ending email distribution of ARRL bulletins are at <http://arrl.org/bulletins>.

Sunspot numbers for September 16 through 22 were 46, 41, 42, 50, 38, 37, and 26 with a mean of 40. 10.7 cm flux was 82.5, 82.2, 82.1, 81.2, 82.6, 84.6 and 84.8 with a mean of 82.9. Estimated planetary A indices were 6, 8, 4, 4, 4, 6 and 2 with a mean of 3.7. Estimated mid-latitude A indices were 5, 7, 2, 2, 3, 5 and 1 with a mean of 2.9.

Hamfests and Flea Markets

Courtesy of RAC.

Hamilton ARC Hamfest

Date: Saturday, October 16, 2010

Location: Ancaster Fair Grounds, south-west of Ancaster at the corner of highways #53 (Wilson Street/Garner Road) and #52 (Copetown Road/Trinity Road). Access from east or west by taking exit 55 from Highway 403 (west of Hamilton). For a printable map and registration form go to www.hamiltonarc.ca

Opening times: Commercial and Indoor vendors after 7:00 a.m.
General admission after 9:00 a.m.

Cost: \$10 per 8 foot table plus admission
admission \$6 per person

Talk-in frequency: 146.760 (-) 131.8

Description: A fleamarket, with commercial booths and sales. Open to everyone. Door prizes and major draw prizes.

For more info: Please register tables in advance by contacting Vendor Liaison, Mr. Mardy Eedson, VE3QEE, at ve3qee@hamiltonarc.ca or call 905 648 0187.

Email contact: ve3qee@hamiltonarc.ca

Webpage: <http://www.hamiltonarc.ca/>

York Region ARC Hamfest

Date: Saturday, November 6, 2010

Closest town: Markham, ON

Directions to location: Markham Fair grounds, 10801 McCowan Road on the North East corner of McCowan Road and Elgin Mills Road. McCowan Road runs North/South and is the first road west of Hwy#48 (Markham Road). There is an exit for

McCowan Road from Hwy#401 and also an exit for McCowan Road from Hwy#407. Markham Fair grounds are North of both Highways. For a detailed map and maps that you can print off go to the following site:

http://www.markhamfair.ca/how_to_get.asp

For those of you with a GPS unit plug in the address above or use the following data:

LAT: 43 deg 55 min 29 sec N

LONG: 79 deg 17 min 39 sec W

Opening times: 0630 for Vendors; 0900 for General Admission

Cost: All admissions include free coffee!

General Admission: \$7.00

Vendors: \$30 per 8 ft table, with one free admission per table rented. Additional admissions are \$7.00.

Talk-in frequency: VE3YRA 145.350 MHz (-)

Description: This the the 34th edition of the largest indoor hamfest in Canada. With winter on its way this a great time to think about your favourite indoor hobby, Amateur Radio.

- Over 200 vendors
- Lots of space for socializing
- Exhibits
- Free Parking
- Great Door Prizes
- Refreshments
- Grand Prizes including (2) \$500.00 gift certificates
- Licensing Examinations (register with Hamfest Co-ordinator prior to Hamfest to ensure we bring enough exams.)

For more info: 1) Visit the YRARC Hamfest site at:

<http://www.yrarc.on.ca/hamfest.shtml>

or

2) Send an email to yrarc.hamfest@gmail.com

Email contact: yrarc.hamfest@gmail.com

Webpage: <http://www.yrarc.on.ca/hamfest.shtml>