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WAVELENGTH

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

PARTICIPATE – LEARN – ENJOY

December 2008

Volume 2 Issue 8

President:	Bernadine Dinnard-Williams VE3YDB	Sunday	SARC Nets 28.730 Mhz CW 10:00 AM
Vice-President:	Open		SSB 10:30 AM
Past President:	Bill Catlender VE3ILE	Tuesday	147.060 MHz (VE3RPT) 7:30 PM
Secretary:	Ray Chow VE3ZXC		Alternate frequency 146.520 MHz simplex
Treasurer:	Lambert Philadelphia VE3LYP	Thursday	28.730 MHz SSB 7:00 PM
Membership:	Joe Ditta VA3JDX		
Communications:	Open		Everyone is invited to check in on CW before the nets start.
Field Day:	Rod Long VE3SOY		
Education:	Ralph Muecke VE3CIW		These are open nets. All licensed hams are welcome. Come and join us.
Examiner:	Nick Blacklock VE3EBC		
Assistant Secretary:	Rudie Toroian VE3OUA		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.
Archives:	Gord Hogarth VE3CNA		
Elmer:	Tony Fegan VE3QF		
Security:	Gord Gault VE3UFF		

Members Wanted - No Experience Necessary!

You don't have to be a licensed amateur to join the club. We welcome anyone who has an interest in radio or electronics. Membership dues are \$25 per year.

If you want to get licensed, we can help. We offer courses on basic radio theory every Friday night from 6:00 to 9:00 PM at the Seniors lounge in the Don Montgomery Community Recreation Centre, 2467 Eglinton Avenue East, near Kennedy subway/GO station. Courses are included in membership dues.

Christmas Party

In past years we have had our election on the same night as the Christmas party, which made it difficult to invite guests. This year the Board has decided to keep the party and election separate. The Christmas party will be on December 15. There will be lots of food and entertainment, so come out and enjoy.

Election Update

Elections for the 2009 Board of Directors and Executive Panel took place at our meeting on December 8.

The elected executive officers for 2009 are:

President: **Bernadine Dinnard-Williams**
VE3YDB

Vice-President: **Cyril Jones** VA3CJE

Secretary: **Ray Chow** VE3ZXC

Treasurer: **Lambert Philadelphia** VE3LYP

Membership Coordinator: **Joe Ditta** VA3JDX

Education Coordinator: **Ralph Muecke** VE3CIW

Field Day Coordinator: **Rod Long** VE3SOY with assistance from Ralph Muecke VE3CIW, Bernie Roche VE3OTR and Hugh Gillon VE3HAG

Communications Coordinator: **Bob Chrysler** VE3IEL with assistance from Audrey Little VA3YD and Gord Hogarth VE3CNA

Assistant Secretary: **Amy Bautista**

The remaining executive positions will be appointed by the President in January.

Thanks to all who volunteered to stand for election, and congratulations to the members of the new executive panel.

Radio Cheat Sheets

At a recent meeting, Bernie VE3OTR suggested that the club could collect information about setting up various radios. The idea is to have a set of "cheat sheets" to get you up and running quickly.

This would be very helpful in emergency situations where it is often necessary to operate with whatever equipment is available. It would also come in handy during community events when you need to set a repeater frequency and offset.

So, with that in mind, if you have any (non-copyrighted) material to share, email ve3zxc at ve3we.org. Thanks!

Introduction to Ubuntu Linux

by Hugh Gillon VE3HAG
(with help from Ray Chow VE3ZXC)

Having used the Windows operating system with its many variations, I have had my fair share of problems. I recently discovered the Linux operating system, and have installed the Ubuntu 8.04 distribution on my computer. The install was very quick, about thirty to forty minutes.

As with most Linux distributions, Ubuntu is highly customizable. Unlike Windows, you have a choice of desktop environments. By default, Ubuntu installs the GNOME Desktop, but you can install other environments (for example, KDE, which is also very popular and may look more familiar to Windows users).

Among other things, the GNOME Desktop interface includes the desktop, two panels (the bars at the top and bottom of the screen), windows, workspaces, and a file manager. You can divide your desktop into multiple workspaces to

group related tasks together, and switch from one workspace to another with a single mouse click.

The top panel shows the main menu bar, date and time, and various application launcher icons. The bottom panel shows a list of open windows and the workspace switcher. You can customize the panels to include different tools, menus, launchers and utility applications.

One special feature of Ubuntu is the Synaptic Package Manager, which allows you to add, configure, upgrade and remove software packages, and to add repositories. You can even upgrade the entire operating system.

To run Synaptic, use **System > Administration > Synaptic Package Manager** from the panel menu bar. The left pane of the application shows package categories or groups. When you select a category you will see a list of software packages in the upper right pane, and when you click on a package the description appears in the lower right pane. Each package contains a specific program (for example, music player or web browser) or service (such as a collection of device drivers).

One of the package categories is "Amateur Radio". It contains packages for satellite tracking, Morse code training, PSK and fax modem programs. There are categories for Games, Internet, Graphics and Development among others.

The Linux system is open source, which means the source code for the programs are available for those who want to learn programming. The Package Manager has a section on development for those who wish to improve on the operating system - or just for curiosity. I will probably get involved with this at a later date.

I obtained the operating system from the website: www.ubuntu.com and navigated to download and selected a file server in Canada. This is a 3 hour download! I now have an image file which is 798 MB in size. I burned a CD with the image file. I booted my computer from the CD and saw Ubuntu Linux for the first time.

I have been using Linux for 1 year now and I like it. I have Windows XP on one hard drive and Ubuntu Linux on a separate hard drive. I use the computer's BIOS to change the boot disk to

switch operating systems. I could have used the bootloader to present a menu for me. If you are putting Linux on a hard drive with Windows, the installation program will install a bootloader called GRUB, which will allow you to select which operating system you want to use. To change operating systems, you have to exit and reboot the computer to access the other operating system.

The standard Ubuntu CD can operate as a "live CD" without being installed on the hard drive. This is the perfect way to try it out and decide whether it is right for you.

DX News

QST de W1AW
DX Bulletin 51 ARLD051
From ARRL Headquarters
Newington CT December 11, 2008
To all radio amateurs

This week's bulletin was made possible with information provided by NC1L, QRZ DX, the OPDX Bulletin, DXNL, 425 DX News, The Daily DX, Contest Corral from QST and the ARRL Contest Calendar and WA7BNM web sites. Thanks to all.

UGANDA, 5X. Graham, 5X1GS has been active on 80 meters around 1945 to 2100z. He may also be active on 160 meters. QSL via WB2YQH.

SENEGAL, 6W. William, F1TZG is QRV as 6W/F1TZG December 14. Activity is on all HF bands, including 6 meters, using SSB. QSL to home call.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, 9Q. Philippe, F5LTB is QRV as 9Q1TB and will be here until December 20. He is usually active on 20 meters around 0630 to 0700z and 15 meters around 1530 to 1600z. QSL via SM5DJZ.

TONGA, A3. Kawe, W6ZL may be QRV as A35KL from Foa Island, IOTA OC-169, from December 17 to 19. QSL to home call.

QATAR, A7. Juma, A71EM has been active on 160 meters around 1730z, 80 meters around 1800z and 40 meters around 1900z. QSL via EA7FTR.

PAKISTAN, AP. Tariq, AP2TN has been active on 40 and 20 meters around 1300 to 1500z. QSL via DJ9ZB.

CHINA, BY. Tian Jin club members BD3BXH/2, BG3DDB/2, BG3DCI/2 and others are QRV from Juhua Island, IOTA AS-151, until December 13. QSL via BD3BXH.

URUGUAY, CX. Look for CX1F to be QRV from San Gabriel Island, IOTA SA-057, beginning December 13. Activity will be on 80 to 10 meters, including 2 meters. QSL via CX2FAA.

SOUTH COOK ISLANDS, E5. Aki, JA1KAJ is QRV as E51KAJ. He and Victor, E51CG are QRV from Rarotonga, IOTA OC-013, until December 17. Activity is on 80 to 10 meters using CW and SSB. QSL to home calls.

ETHIOPIA, ET. Abel is QRV from the E.A.R.S. club station ET3AA and has been active on 15 meters around 0900 to 1230z. QSL via operator's instructions.

GUADELOUPE, FG. Members of the Radio Club Guadeloupe are QRV as FG5KC/p until December 13 during a demonstration for their youth at a science festival on a University Campus. Activity is on all HF/VHF bands using all modes.

LEBANON, OD. OD5NJ has been active on 40 meters. QSL via EA5BYP.

ANTARCTICA. Paul, ON3PC will be QRV as OP0LE until mid February 2009 from the new Belgian Antarctic station "Princess Elisabeth" on Dronning Maud Land.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA, P2. Norm, P29NB has been active on 6 meters around 0045z.

CENTRAL KIRIBATI, T31. Haru, JA1XGI is QRV as T31/T32XG until December 19. QSL to homecall.

GABON, TR. Roland, F8EN will be QRV as TR50R until mid January 2009. He is generally active on 40, 30 and 20 meters using CW. QSL via F6AJA.

CHAD, TT. Jovica, E78A is QRV as TT8JT and is here until the end of 2008. He is active on 40, 30

and 20 meters using CW in his limited spare time. QSL via E73Y.

EUROPEAN RUSSIA, UA. Operators UA9XC, UA9XF, UA9XLC and UA9XTL will be QRV as RI1OTA from Solovetskiy, IOTA EU-066, from December 15 to 19. QSL via UA9XC.

KAZAKHSTAN, UN. Special event stations UN70FF, UO70F, UP70F, and UQ70F are QRV until December 15 from Pavlodar City in celebration of its 70th anniversary. QSL via operators' instructions.

BURKINA FASO, XT. David, XT2MSF has been QRV on 20 meters using PSK around 2130z and then on 30 meters around 2300z. QSL via F5CWU.

CAMBODIA, XU. Peter, NO2R will be QRV as XU7ACY from Sihanoukville beginning December 15. Activity will be on 160 to 10 meters using CW and SSB, with an emphasis on 160 and 80 meters. His length of stay is unknown. QSL via W2EN.

THIS WEEKEND ON THE RADIO. The ARRL 10-Meter Contest, North American High Speed Meteor Scatter Winter Rally, NCCC Sprint and MDXA PSK DeathMatch are all scheduled for this weekend. Please see December QST, page 68, and the ARRL and WA7BNM contest web sites for details.

Propagation Forecast

QST de W1AW
Propagation Forecast Bulletin 52 ARLP052
From Tad Cook, K7RA
Seattle, WA December 12, 2008
To all radio amateurs

Finally this week a sunspot group appeared, and this time there was about three weeks since the last group disappeared. The first spotless day after sunspot group 1008's last appearance was Tuesday, November 18 and the last spotless day before group 1009 emerged was Tuesday, December 9. As expected, this was another Cycle

24 group, emerging far south of our Sun's equator.

This weekend is the ARRL 10-meter contest, and it would be great to have enough sunspots to drive the MUF (Maximum Usable Frequency) above 28 MHz, but that doesn't seem likely, as group 1009 is near the western limb of the visible solar disk.

What level of solar activity would we need in order to see the MUF above 28 MHz? That varies according to the locations of the two stations trying to communicate, the season, and the time of day. For example, if the date is December 13, the path from Cleveland, Ohio to Dallas, Texas is likely to briefly have an MUF at 28.0 MHz around 1730z, if the average sunspot number was at least 105 for several days.

In our example, if the average sunspot number for several days was 125, the three-hour period from 1700-2000z would have an MUF above 28 MHz, and the 1730-1800z period would likely have the best signals.

If we calculate the path from Boston to Atlanta for the same date, instead of 105, the average sunspot number for several days should be at least 131 to reach an MUF of 28.0 MHz.

But don't expect 10 meters to be unusable this weekend. An MUF above 28 MHz is desirable for very reliable communications, but perhaps sporadic-E skip will offer surprises. Summer sporadic-E is more intense, but this time of year we should see some sporadic-E.

A few weeks ago Vic Woodling, WB4SLM of Centerville, Georgia wrote about an experience on 30 meters in the middle of the day, copying strong European stations, and also 5R8IC working into Europe from Madagascar, but with weaker signals on Vic's end. This was at 1630z, and when Vic came back to the radio at 1830z, they were even stronger.

Although in Vic's experience this is uncommon, a check with a propagation program for 30 meters on November 22 with zero sunspots between Georgia and England shows propagation closely matching his report. At 1630z it shows the relative signal level at 15 db, and then at 1830z it jumps to 29 db.

But if he looks further east to the Czech Republic, the signals stay around the level that they would be for England at 1630z, all through the same period.

Ed Clulow, N7TL of Portland, Oregon commented on 75 meter conditions during the SSB Sweepstakes Contest, which was November 15-17. He uses an inverted-vee dipole, and said after dabbling in contests for several decades, he has never seen propagation like it was on Saturday evening, and said it sounded more like 20 meters. He worked Midwest and East Coast stations with ease, snagging them on the first or second call. He knows some hams never venture below 20 meters, and thinks some of us may be missing good propagation at the bottom of the sunspot cycle.

Dave Bennett, VE7YJ of Aldergrove, British Columbia wrote, "Carrying on from WE0H's report on 600 meter activities, I have noted in the past week or so reception from the powerful Far Eastern Russian broadcasters on 153, 180, 189, 234, and 279 KHz. They were at their best on November 29, around 0700z, but were heard as early as 0440z. They haven't been as good the last couple of days, but were still detectable. I'm using an old IC-751A with a 160M inverted V antenna and could probably get even better results with a bigger antenna. Last few nights 160 meters has been spotty as well. VE6s were strong, but the Century Club net on 1892 has been poor, whereas the week before I was hearing stations as far east and south as Texas and Ohio."

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 web page at,

<http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/propagation.html>.

For a detailed explanation of the numbers used in this bulletin see, <http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/k9la-prop.html>. An archive of past propagation bulletins is at <http://www.arrl.org/wlaw/prop/>.

Monthly propagation charts between four USA regions and twelve overseas locations are at <http://www.arrl.org/qst/propcharts/>.

Instructions for starting or ending email distribution of this bulletin are at <http://www.arrl.org/wlaw.html#email>.

Sunspot numbers for December 4 through 10 were 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, and 13 with a mean of 1.9. 10.7 cm flux was 69.6, 68.8, 69.1, 69, 68.5, 68.7, and 70.8 with a mean of 69.2. Estimated planetary A indices were 6, 10, 7, 6, 5, 0 and 2 with a mean of 5.1. Estimated mid-latitude A indices were 4, 7, 14, 6, 1, 1 and 2 with a mean of 5.

Club Jackets

If you are interested in buying a club jacket, we currently have a supplier who offers a bomber-style jacket with fleece liner, suitable for colder weather. The colour is a light navy blue similar to the royal blue we have previously used. Price will be approximately \$77 including taxes - this price includes a sewn-on club crest and your call sign. Please check with Ralph for more details.

Upcoming Meetings

December 15, 2008 - SARC Christmas Party
January 12, 2009 - SARC Annual General Meeting
January 26, 2009 - Bernie VE3OTR will be giving a talk about "**Hanging Around in High Places**". If you want to know more, you'll just have to come to the meeting.

CHU is going QSY

(From the National Research Council website)
Time to change your shortwave dial !!
After seventy years of broadcasting Canada's official time, NRC's shortwave station CHU will move the transmission frequency for the 7335 KHz transmitter to 7850 KHz. The change goes into effect on 01 January 2009 at 00:00 UTC.

CHU is a part of NRC's system for disseminating official time throughout Canada, broadcasting 24 hours a day from a location approximately 15 km south-west of downtown Ottawa. Listeners hear tones to mark the seconds, voice to announce the time in French and English, and digital data to set computers.

Full story: http://inms-ienm.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/common_files/stories/chu/communique_e.pdf



**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
to all**