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WAVELENGTH

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

PARTICIPATE – LEARN – ENJOY

February 2009

Volume 3 Issue 2

President:	Bernadine Dinnard-Williams VE3YDB	Sunday
Vice-President:	Cyril Jones VA3CJE	Tuesday
Past President:	Bill Catlender VE3ILE	
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Treasurer:	Lambert Philadelphia VE3LYP	
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Assistant Secretary:	Amy Bautista	
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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.

Class Projects

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

I have been teaching a General Class license class for the past five years. The first year, I had five students, the next year 35! This year, I have only five again.

Not being a pedagogical genius, it never really occurred to me until last year to give my General Class students a project to work on while we slogged through the material. Last year, some of them built little QRP kits. Not only was that fun, it was educational. Some of them had never even soldered before!

Since last year's project worked out so well, I am asking this year's students to do some kind of project, but one that they choose themselves. Here's the short list that I came up with:

- Build a kit like my students did last year.
- Build a 2m beam. At our first meeting, one of the guys noted that while he could hear a repeater about 30 miles away from his QTH, he wasn't able to hit it with the 5/8-wavelength vertical he was using. I suggest that he build a Cheap Yagi (<http://www.fredspinner.com/W0FMS/CheapYagi/vjbcy.html>).
- Download some antenna simulation software and analyze a dipole or vertical antenna. MM-ANA (<http://mmhamsoft.amateur-radio.ca/mmana/index.htm>) is free and looks to be a pretty good program.
- Learn Morse Code. Being the CW geek that I am, how could I not suggest this?

I wanted to give my students a bigger choice, so I asked the readers of my blog for more suggestions:

Kenneth, W6KWF, replied, "Hands down the most useful and most successful projects I've built have been 2m J-poles. I've built both the 1/2-in. copper tubing and TV line variants, and use both as my primary antennas. The TV line one is nice because I live in an apartment, so when I need a

good antenna, I tie a magnet to the top of it and stick it to my upstairs neighbor's balcony. It's a very forgiving antenna."

Zeke also like the idea of building J-pole antennas. "You didn't mention the age group/groups you are working with," he said, "but have you thought about a hands-on project such as a j-pole for 2 or 6 meters. It would give them an opportunity to feel the pride that follows an involved project. Furthermore, the J-pole is a pretty good antenna."

John N8ZYA, said, "I like the [idea of learning CW].it's like learning to play the guitar or piano. A skill that can be used your entire lifetime!"

Robert suggested, "How about building a 20 meter delta loop? I am very inexperienced when it comes to antenna building, but a friend suggested this for working DX on 20 meters and it worked out really well. In fact, my first contact on it was Spain!"

I would love to offer my students even more choices. If you have a suggestion, please e-mail it to me at cwgeek@kb6nu.com. Thanks!

Don't get bugged out

By Bob Chrysler, VE3IEL

If you live in an apartment, sooner or later you will spy an insect or two lurking around. Well, hey there, if you should spy one or two, you can be quite sure that there are a few more around somewhere.

Remember when the Shell company used to sell those Vapona strips to ward off insects. Canadian Tire now has a version of the Vapona strips that although a little expensive, for what they are, these things do work.

To work well you must put at least one unit in each room of your apartment. That is more expense. Just hang them up, and leave them. It takes a little while for them to get rid of bugs; but, after a while you will not see any more bugs for

quite a while. The professional bug people would charge you more than these things cost if you had to call them in yourself. These Vapona things do not seem to have any adverse effect on people. If necessary hang them higher than children can reach. If you have a sensitive nose, you might smell them once in a while. They, however, are not strong smelling.

Remember your parents saying, "don't let the bed bugs bite." Vapona strips keep you from getting bugged out.

SARC Meetings

February 16 - no meeting as the community centre is closed for Family Day

February 23 - to be announced

March 9 - Nick VE3EBC will be our speaker. Bring your handheld and compare its performance with others.

March 16 - Special presentation - Empire of the Air (courtesy of Bob VE3IEL) - rescheduled from Feb. 16

March 23 - RDF (Radio Direction Finding)

Announcements

From Bob VE3IEL:

According to Cathy Hrischenko's column in January's TCA magazine, Thelma Woodhouse VE3CLT, a longtime member of the Scarborough Amateur Radio Club, has moved to a new location.

She would like to hear from her friends. It would be nice if as many of the SARC members as possible could sign a thinking of you card; and, get it to her.

According to RAC, her address is:

Mrs. Thelma Woodhouse VE3CLT, 15055 Yonge Street, Suite 320, Park Place Manor, Aurora, ON. L4E 6T4.

School is in

Lambert VE3LYP and Ralph VE3CIW are our instructors for the basic amateur radio course. They hold classes every Friday night from 6:00 to 9:00 PM at our usual meeting location in the Don Montgomery Community Recreation Centre. Classes are free with club membership. For more information, contact membership@ve3we.org

DX News

QST de W1AW
DX Bulletin 5 ARLD005
From ARRL Headquarters
Newington CT February 5, 2009
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.

EAST MALAYSIA, 9M6. John, 9M6XRO and Steve, 9M6DXX will be QRV from Sabah, IOTA OC-088, from February 7 to 10. Activity will be on 160 to 10 meters using CW and SSB. QSL both calls via M0URX.

ANDORRA, C3. Finn, OV8FM and Martin, 5P1M will be QRV as C3/OV8FM and C3/5P1M, respectively, from February 10 to 13. Activity will be on 40 and 20 meters using SSB, RTTY, SSTV and PSK. QSL via OV1A.

ENGLAND, G. Tim, G4STH and Hazel, G4YLO are QRV using special event call sign GB50BH until March 3 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the death of the singer Buddy Holly. QSL via G4STH.

DOMINICA, J7. John, K3TEJ will be QRV as J7N from February 11 to 27. Activity will be on 160, 30, 17 and 12 meters using CW and RTTY. This includes entries in the upcoming CQ WW RTTY and ARRL DX CW contests as Single Op/ALL Band entries. QSL to home call.

ST. VINCENT, J8. Nigel, G3TXF is QRV as J88XF from Mayreau Island, IOTA NA-025, one of the smaller Grenadine islands, until February 9. Activity is on 40, 30, 20 and 17 meters using only CW. QSL to home call.

DESECHEO ISLAND, KP5. Look for a group of operators to be QRV as K5D from February 12 to 26. Activity will be on 160 to 6 meters using CW, SSB and RTTY. QSL via N2OO.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA, P2. Jerry, P29ZAD is QRV from Buka Island, IOTA OC-135. QSL to home call.

SOUTH GEORGIA ISLAND, VP8. Lars, VP8DIF has been QRV on 20 meters using RTTY around 1630 to 1900z. QSL via DJ9ZB.

NICARAGUA, YN. Andrei, NP3D will be QRV as H7/NP3D and YN2/EW1AR from February 11 to 15. This includes activity as YN2S in the upcoming CQ WW RTTY contest. QSL direct to home call.

OPERATIONS APPROVED FOR DXCC CREDIT. The following operations are approved for DXCC credit: Bhutan, A5100A, 2008 operation; Afghanistan, T6EE, Additional documentation has been received to include 2006 and 2007 operations. If you had a QSO rejected for these dates send a note to dxccarrl.org to be placed on the list for an update; Republic of the Congo, TN5SN, current operation effective October 2008; Chad, TT8HA, operations for 2007 and 2008; Chad, TT8SK, operations for 2008 and 2009; Albania, ZA/F4DTO, 2008 operation; and Albania, ZA0/I0SNY, ZA0/I8LWK, ZA0/I8YGZ, ZA0/IK2AQZ and ZA0/IK7JWX, operations in 2008.

Q&A

Question: What is the difference between a car salesman and a computer salesman?

Answer: A car salesman knows when he is lying.

Propagation Bulletin

QST de W1AW
Propagation Forecast Bulletin 6 ARLP006
From Tad Cook, K7RA
Seattle, WA February 6, 2009
To all radio amateurs

K7RA is on the road this week from Charleston, South Carolina.

Still no hint of sunspots or sunspots to come. We did see some geomagnetic activity on February 4 from a possible coronal mass ejection. This raised the planetary A index to 16 that day.

Current prediction is for quiet conditions. Geophysical Institute Prague predicts quiet conditions for February 6-12. NOAA and USAF predict quiet geomagnetic conditions with planetary A index at 5, but it jumps to 8 on February 15, then back to 5 until February 22-24, which has a predicted planetary A index of 10, 8 and 8. While we don't see much excitement at the high end of the HF spectrum, the quiet conditions and winter nights are great for the lower frequencies.

There were many comments on the fascinating several decades old letter from Ed Tilton, W1HDQ, the editor of this bulletin until 1991. I've never learned when this bulletin began, and if Ed always wrote it.

I remember copying it on CW from W1AW as a boy in the mid 1960s, and it was written by W1HDQ then. No one currently at ARRL HQ seems to know either.

Starting out as a 12-year-old ham in the 1960s, I was always accustomed to having some source for info from an older ham. For instance, if I wanted to know how experimenters set up spark stations in the early 20th century, there were plenty of people still around in the late 20th century who had done it themselves when they were younger, and could lend me their first-hand knowledge. But now after 44 years as a ham, there aren't that

many people older than me who I can ask these sorts of questions.

Jim Muiteer, N6TP of San Mateo, California commented on the W1HDQ letter. Jim wrote, "Ed's letter pointed out there are many layers to ten-meter propagation and the selection of the date for the ten-meter contest was no accident. The three hundred mile path makes good sense. I believe the British Chain Home Radar system of Battle of Britain fame used frequencies in that range, perhaps 30 to 50 MHz. In effect it was partially an over the horizon radar and may have relied on tropo inadvertently."

Just after last week's bulletin, Jeff Hartley, N8II of Shepherdstown, West Virginia wrote, "The highlight of the week was Monday (January 26) working FW8DX on 75 meters at sunrise. 17 meters was barely open to Europe all week long except on Monday conditions were good enough for a brief opening on 15 meters to F/EA/sw DL from 1510-1545Z."

He continues, "I heard double hop Es on 10 meters Sunday evening (January 25) into New Mexico and Arizona, but no QSOs as they were fairly weak here and they had a good opening going with the SE USA with S9 reports."

Jeff goes on to say, "By all accounts, the CQ WW 160 had the best conditions ever; I was too tired to operate past my normal bedtime, but did manage to work over 1000 QSOs and 51 DXCC countries with 6W/DL2MDU being a new one. Conditions were so good that many East Coast stations worked UA9 and several caught EY8MM."

Mike Schaffer, KA3JAW of Tampa, Florida likes to hunt commercial broadcast television DX, and reports that last winter he didn't see any, but on January 25 he reported, "I just snagged my initial 2009 winter season television DX on channel two coming from HIJB Tele Antillas, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. I saw the station logo (TA) several minutes before 17:00 GMT. The audio level was about equal to the video quality in this case, but normally the audio is loud compared to the video level. The distance from me here in Tampa, Florida to Santo Domingo city is 1,045 miles. Half this distance, 523 miles, would place

the Es plasma cloud near south-west of George Town, Bahamas."

Mike copied the signal for less than 3 minutes.

Later that same day he copied WKAQ on channel 2 at 2313z from San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1,232 miles away. He said the sporadic-E opening that day ran from 1530-2320z. The next day, also on channel 2 he copied a TV station in Managua, Nicaragua.

A new month began since the last bulletin, so we can calculate another 3-month average of daily sunspot numbers. This new one will be centered on December 2008, and includes data from November 1 2008 through January 31 2009. We were of course hoping for an uptick, but the new average is 3.7, lower than the previous average of 4.4.

Jan 07	22.7
Feb 07	18.5
Mar 07	11.2
Apr 07	12.2
May 07	15.8
Jun 07	18.7
Jul 07	15.4
Aug 07	10.2
Sep 07	5.4
Oct 07	3.0
Nov 07	6.9
Dec 07	8.1
Jan 08	8.5
Feb 08	8.4
Mar 08	8.4
Apr 08	8.9
May 08	5.0
Jun 08	3.7
Jul 08	2.0
Aug 08	1.1
Sep 08	2.5
Oct 08	4.5
Nov 08	4.4
Dec 08	3.7

Bill Van Alstyne, W5WVO of Rio Rancho, New Mexico had some information and comments after this bulletin mentioned some weak signal methods for VHF.

Bill said the web site we mentioned deals with some European practice in Region 1. Stations in North America, Region 2, use different protocols. He writes, "The Region 2 protocols are the default settings in the WSJT software as it is downloaded from Joe Taylor's website (<http://physics.princeton.edu/pulsar/K1JT/>).

Please, download the manual as well as the software."

Bill continues, "JT6M is only one of the transmission modes contained within the WSJT suite intended for meteor scatter work. The original MS mode, FSK441, remains the primary mode used for MS in North America. Of course JT6M will often work, but as stated in the web page, you need a decodable burst of at least one second duration. While it is much more likely to get pings this long on 6 meters than on higher-frequency bands, it is likewise true that most 6-meter meteor pings are shorter than that, and hence won't contain a full message. Using FSK441, a full message can be transmitted and decoded in as little as 150 ms."

He goes on to say, "The trade-off between these two MS modes is sensitivity versus time. FSK441 is faster because it takes up more bandwidth and is therefore less sensitive; a signal at least 1 dB above the noise floor is necessary. JT6M, on the other hand, can decode a message as much as 12 dB or more below the noise floor! But the signal must be present for at least one second, and more reliable decodes are obtained when the signal is present for an even greater length of time."

He ends with, "The best use of JT6M, in the opinion of many, is not actually 6-meter meteor scatter, but rather very-weak-signal tropo, ionosscatter, or sporadic-E."

For newcomers, Bill recommends the WSJT Yahoo Group at, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WSJTgroup>.

The group has a web site at, <http://www.ykc.com/wa5ufh/>.

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 January 29 through February 4 were 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, and 0 with a mean of 0. 10.7 cm flux was 69.3, 69.1, 69.4, 69.5, 69.1, 69.3, and 69.5 with a mean of 69.3. Estimated planetary A indices were 4, 4, 7, 3, 2, 4 and 16 with a mean of 5.7. Estimated mid-latitude A indices were 3, 3, 4, 1, 0, 2 and 10 with a mean of 3.3.

Burlington ARC Flea Market

Date/Time: Saturday, February 28, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM

Location: Royal Canadian Legion - 828 Legion Rd, Burlington

Cost: \$6

Talk-in: VE3RSB - 147.210+; t = 131.8 (required)

Web site: <http://www.barc.ca/>