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WAVELENGTH

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

PARTICIPATE – LEARN – ENJOY

September 2009

Volume 3 Issue 7

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		Tuesday
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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.

School is in!

We will be having an Orientation Night for classes at 6 PM on Friday, September 18 at the Don Montgomery Community Recreation Centre. Study guides are available from Radio World, Durham Radio or by mail directly from the publisher, Coax Publications (www.coaxpublications.ca).

Meetings

We meet on the 2nd and 4th Monday of the month from September to June (except statutory holidays). The next two meetings are:

September 14

September 28

Our meeting place is the Seniors Lounge on the upper level of the Don Montgomery Community Recreation Centre, 2467 Eglinton Avenue East. Meetings start at 7 PM.

Classes/tech nights are every Friday night from 6 to 9 PM at the same location.

Does Your Club Have an Elmers List?

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

Whilst looking up information for a recent hamfest, I found the club's website and began surfing around. In doing so, I came across their Elmer page (<http://www.mcrca.org/elmers.htm>). On it, they list a variety of topics with the name, call, and phone number of someone who can answer questions on that topic.

My club something similar once, but it was less than successful. I think that one of the problems was that we asked people to fill out a form on our website if they needed any help. That information was e-mailed to one guy, who then forwarded it to the appropriate Elmer. There was just too much time lag between the time someone asked for help and when they got it. Or, it may have been that filling out the form was just too impersonal.

We are going to try it again, though, using the format that the Monroe club uses. I'm also going to give it more billing on our website, and push it more at meetings and other gatherings.

The topics the Monroe club lists on their website are:

- Antennas
- Buying Your First Radio
- Code Practice
- Computers
- Packet
- County Hunting
- DXCC Awards
- Rag Chewers Club
- Worked All States
- DX

- FM
- Homebrew
- Testing
- Public Service
- Technical Q&A
- Traffic
- Tube Radios

We already have Elmers for several of these topics. I, for example, would be more than happy to volunteer to be the Morse Code/CW Practice Elmer. We have one member who is an avid County Hunter, another who restores vintage gear, and yet another who's been spearheading a statewide effort to set up a packet network throughout Michigan.

In addition, we are going to add or modify several of the categories. For example, Computers might become "Computers/Software" depending on who volunteers to be the Elmer. We have a couple of guys who are heavily into VHF/UHF operation and contesting, so we'll be adding those topics as well.

I really do hope that this will be an important resource for our club. In the past year, we've helped quite a few folks get their licenses, and now we need to help them take advantage of that license and get the most out of the hobby. Elmering is the way to do that.

Does your club have an Elmer list? If so, does it have topics that I haven't thought of yet? How do you get newcomers to take advantage of the knowledge and experience of your Elmers? And, finally, what topics have you volunteered to be Elmer for? Let me know by e-mailing me at cwgeek@kb6nu.com.

Stuart's First QSO

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

One of the great things about Field Day are the stories. Every year, I add a story or two to my repertoire. This year is no exception.

My best story from Field Day 2009 starts about 1:30 pm on Saturday. I was at my post at the public information table/GOTA station. We had been ready to rock and roll for at least a half hour, so a group of us were just sitting around chewing the fat when 13-year-old Stuart and his mother walked up to the table.

Her son was a little on the shy side, so his mother explained that Stuart had seen a listing of our Field Day site on the Internet and had asked her to bring him out to see us. She mentioned that Stuart had been listening to ham radio operators on his little Yaesu handheld scanner for several years and was very excited to actually meet some ham radio operators and see ham radio in action.

Not only that, she said that he had taught himself Morse Code. A kid after my own heart! I quickly volunteered to give them a tour of our Field Day site. First, I showed him our VHF/UHF station, and he seemed really impressed with the five single-band radios.

Next, I took him into the 40m phone station. I asked how fast he could copy Morse Code, and he said 30 words per minute. I cranked the receiver down into the CW portion of the band, and sure enough, he could copy anything that I tuned in.

At this point, it was still only 1:45 pm, so I told him, "Let's go over to one of the CW stations, and we'll see if we can make a contact." We marched over to the CW #2 station, and after getting clearance from the station captain, I tuned around for a clear frequency, then called CQ. Immediately, N5VV, replied.

At this point, Stuart was so excited, he was shaking a little bit. Since the contest was just about ready to start, I kept the contact short, but that didn't matter. Stuart had finally gotten to see ham radio in action.

Stuart's mother then inquired about taking the test. I explained that our Volunteer Examiners give the test every second Saturday of the month and gave her the URL of our website. She said that Stuart had been studying and was ready to take the test.

Unfortunately, they had to leave at that point. I told Stuart's mother that we'd be there through 2pm Sunday and to come back any time. She said that they'd definitely be back the next day.

Stuart Makes His First Contact

Stuart and his mother returned about 1:30 pm on Sunday. He wanted to see the VHF/UHF station again, so that was our first stop. He took a couple of photos of the setup, and then I suggested we go over to the GOTA station. When we first got there, someone was at the mike, but shortly afterwards, they got up, and Stuart and I took the controls.

When we first sat down, I made a few contacts using my call to show him how to use the paddle. I noted that holding the levers down produces a series of dits or dahs, and that by tapping the other lever while holding down the first, you can produce a dit between dahs or a dah between dits.

Then, I asked him if he'd like to try it. He said yes, so just to see how it would go, I tuned up to above 7100 kHz. There was no activity up there, so I set the keyer speed to 15 wpm and told him to send my callsign a few times. He reached over with his left hand and sent it perfectly. Now, remember, this is someone who'd never touched a paddle of any kind before. Not only that, he even sent the K (dah-di-dah) iambically! That is to say that he held the dah paddle while tapping the dit paddle to slip in a dit between the two dahs.

Then, I asked if he'd like to make some contacts. He said yes, so I said, "Let's switch seats." We switched seats, and I said, "OK, tune around a little and find a strong station calling CQ." We found K2ZR, and I coached him a little on how to reply. "Now, remember," I said, "we're going to use the W8PGW callsign." When I gave him the nod to send, he reached over with his RIGHT hand and sent W8PGW perfectly! When K2ZR replied with our call and the exchange, I coached him to reply with "4A MI." Not only did he do that, but he slipped in a "R" to denote that we'd copied the exchange. When K2ZR replied with a "TU," I showed him how to log the contact.

That's all the coaching I needed to do. After the first contact, I said, "OK. Now, tune around for another station calling CQ, and we'll make another contact." He was off to the races. As soon as he made a contact, he jumped up to type it into the log. His arms weren't long enough to reach the computer from where he was seated.

When we started, the keyer speed was set to 15 wpm. After a couple of contacts, I asked if he might want to send faster. When he said OK, I bumped it up to 18 wpm. After a few QSOs with only a couple of mistakes, he asked if we could go faster, so I set it at 20 wpm. Again, only a couple of mistakes, so we

bumped it up to 22 wpm. There, he started making more mistakes, but let me repeat, he never touched any kind of key before in his life. I have no doubt that with a little practice, he could easily do 30 wpm.

Overall, he made 12 contacts in the 21 minutes he operated the station. Not a bad rate for someone who'd never sent a character of Morse Code in his life, don't you think?

Unfortunately, Stuart was not able to take the test at our July VE session as he was at Boy Scout camp. Come the second week of August, though, he'll be a ham. He even has a vanity callsign picked out for himself. Listen for him--in the CW bands, of course.

Dan Romanchik, KB6NU, is the station manager for WA2HOM, the ham radio station at Ann Arbor's Hands-On Museum, and the ARRL MI Section's Training Manager. You can read more about his adventures in ham radio by going to www.kb6nu.com.

Have You Moved?

Amateur radio operators are **required** to notify Industry Canada within 30 days of a change in their mailing address. You can inform Industry Canada of your change of address on-line at http://www.callsign.ca/ch_adr_ra.php or you can contact the Industry Canada Amateur Radio Service Centre at:

Phone: 1-888-780-3333 (toll free)

Fax:(613) 991-5575

E-mail: spectrum.amateur@ic.gc.ca

Industry Canada Amateur Radio Service Centre

P.O. Box 9654 Postal Station "T"

Ottawa, ON

K1G 6K9

If you are a RAC member you will also need to advise RAC of your address change. Visit <http://www.rac.ca/adschng.htm>

Hamfests and Flea Markets

32nd Annual London Amateur Radio Club Flea Market

Sponsor: London ARC

Date: Sunday, September 27, 2009

Location: Western Fair Grounds Special Events Building, 900 King Street London Ontario.

Opening times: Vendor setup at 7:30 AM; Doors open to the public at 9 AM

Cost: Tables \$10.00; Admission is \$6.00 (ages 10 and up)

Talk-in frequency: Talk in VA3LON, 147.060 PL 114.8 GPS N 42.9876 W 81.2213

For more info: http://larc.ca/flea_current_flyer.pdf

Hamilton ARC Hamfest

Sponsor: Hamilton ARC

Date: Saturday, October 17, 2009

Location: New Ancaster Fair Grounds, 630 Trinity Rd, Ancaster L0R 1R0

Opening times: Vendor setup at 7 AM; Doors open to public at 9 AM

Cost: Tables \$10; Admission \$6

Talk-in frequency: VE3NCF 146.760- or 444.075+, Tone 131.8

For more info: <http://www.hamiltonarc.ca/>

New release of ExHAMiner

From RAC

An Advanced question bank has been added to the complement of files available for use with ExHAMiner ©, RAC's amateur radio (free!) exam simulation software.

As with the Basic qualification, explanations have been added to the bank and partial exams on specific chapters are possible.

Concurrently, a new version of the program has been released. Major changes include control over the default font, a resizable window and an optional simplified layout for blind users relying on screen reading software.

See the ReadMe file which ships with the program for details.

A full description of the program appeared in the March/April 2007 issue of The Canadian Amateur (TCA, p. 63).

The download address has changed: <http://www.rac.ca/en/amateur-radio/beginner-info/exhaminer/>

Also on that page, you'll find a selection of diagrams that got lost when RIC-3 replaced the previous RIC-24.

Bob Cooke VE3BDB

President, Radio Amateurs of Canada

Quiz for People Who Know Everything

This is a quiz for people who know everything! I found out in a hurry that I didn't. These are not trick questions. They are straight questions with straight answers.

1. Name the one sport in which neither the spectators nor the participants know the score or the leader until the contest ends.
2. What famous North American landmark is constantly moving backward?
3. Of all vegetables, only two can live to produce on their own for several growing seasons. All other vegetables must be replanted every year. What are the only two perennial vegetables?
4. What fruit has its seeds on the outside?
5. In many liquor stores, you can buy pear brandy, with a real pear inside the bottle. The pear is whole and ripe, and the bottle is genuine; it hasn't been cut in any way. How did the pear get inside the bottle?
6. Only three words in standard English begin with the letters "dw" and they are all common words. Name two of them.
7. There are 14 punctuation marks in English grammar.. Can you name at least half of them?
8. Name the only vegetable or fruit that is never sold frozen, canned, processed, cooked, or in any other form except fresh.
9. Name 6 or more things that you can wear on your feet beginning with the letter "S."

Answers To Quiz:

1. Boxing
2. Niagara Falls (The rim is worn down about two and a half feet each year because of the millions of gallons of water that rush over it every minute.)
3. Asparagus and rhubarb
4. Strawberry
5. It grew inside the bottle. The bottles are placed over pear buds when they are small, and are wired in place on the tree. The bottle is left in place for the entire growing season. When the pears are ripe, they are snipped off at the stems.
6. Dwarf, dwell and dwindle
7. Period, comma, colon, semicolon, dash, hyphen, apostrophe, question mark, exclamation point, quotation mark, brackets, parenthesis, braces, and ellipses
8. Lettuce
9. Shoes, socks, sandals, sneakers, slippers, skis, skates, snowshoes, stockings, stilts