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WAVELENGTH

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

PARTICIPATE – LEARN – ENJOY

October 2009

Volume 3 Issue 8

President:	Bernadine Dinnard-Williams	Sunday
	VE3YDB	
Vice-President:	Cyril Jones VA3CJE	
		Tuesday
Secretary:	Ray Chow VE3ZXC	
Treasurer:	Lambert Philadelphia VE3LYP	
Membership:	Joe Ditta VA3JDX	
Communications:	Bob Chrysler VE3IEL	Thursday
Field Day:	Rod Long VE3SOY	
Education:	Ralph Muecke VE3VXY	
Examiner:	Nick Blacklock VE3EBC	
Assistant Secretary:	Amy Bautista	
Archives:	Gord Hogarth VE3CNA	
Elmer:	Rod Long VE3SOY	
	Nick Blacklock VE3EBC	
Security:	Bob Chrysler	
	VE3IEL	

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.

Website improvements

Our website has a new look and new features. Internal links beyond the home page have changed, so please update your bookmarks.

As part of the new design, each member will have a username and password for access to the members-only area. If you have lost your username and password please use the contact form on the website to request one.

International Reply Coupons

DXers often use International Reply Coupons (IRC) to pay for postage from other countries for QSL cards. According to Canada Post:

International Reply Coupons are coupons that may be purchased in Canada and other participating member countries of the Universal Postal Union (UPU). They may be sent in a letter or parcel to be exchanged by a recipient in any member country of the UPU.

The recipient can exchange one coupon for postage stamps, and if not precluded by the internal legislation of the country of exchange, for postal stationery or postal prepayment marks or impressions representing the minimum postage prepayable on an international unregistered airmail letter.

According to a recent RAC bulletin, the older-style IRC with the “Michelangelo” design has recently been replaced by a new design. The older IRCs will be accepted for redemption until 31 December 2009; after that date, post offices will only take the new ones. If you have older IRCs you should exchange them for international stamps for outgoing QSLs as soon as possible.

Learning CW?

At a recent meeting we discussed setting up a CW class for those who are interested. Tony VE3FDU recommended the G4FON Morse Trainer software. This is a Windows application that teaches CW using the Koch method. You can find this at <http://www.g4fon.net/CW%20Trainer.htm>

For Mac users there is Morse Mania: <http://www.blackcatsystems.com/software/morsemania.html>. This is a shareware program but it is free to try.

Thomas VA3TSE also sent in a link to Learn CW Online, a web site that may be useful for those who have a fast connection- no software needed. Visit <http://www.lcwo.net/>

Meetings

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

October 26

November 9

November 23

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.

Hamfests and Flea Markets

Hamilton ARC Hamfest

Sponsor: Hamilton ARC

Date: Saturday, October 17, 2009

Location: New Ancaster Fair Grounds, 630 Trinity Rd, Ancaster ON

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/>

York Region Amateur Radio Hamfest - 33rd Edition

Sponsor: York Region ARC

Date: Saturday, October 24, 2009

Location: Markham Fair Grounds, 10801 McCowan Rd, Markham ON

Opening times: Vendor setup at 6:30 AM; Doors open to public at 9 AM (indoor waiting area opens at 8 AM)

Cost: Tables \$30; Admission \$6

Talk-in frequency: VE3YRA 145.350-

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

Bill 118 Update

(courtesy Toronto FM Communications Society)

Sept 30, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation announced that they have published the new Highway Traffic Act amendment to enact Bill 118, Countering Distracted Driving.

We thank Neil Macklem VE3SST, one of our directors who was only one of two chosen by the ministry to represent the amateur radio community in the MOT policy development meetings. Here are a few links for further information on this law:

MOT Press Release:

<http://news.ontario.ca/mto/en/2009/09/ontarios-new-rules-for-hand-held-wireless-and-entertainment-devices.html>

ONTARIO REGULATION 366/09 of the HTA:

http://www.lois-en-ligne.gouv.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2009/elaws_src_regs_r09366_e.htm

RAC Blog:

<http://racblog.wordpress.com/>

While Licensed Amateurs are exempt from this law until January 1, 2013, we should continue to lead by example and use our radios with great care while driving.

Propagation Forecast

QST de W1AW

Propagation Forecast Bulletin 41 ARLP041

From Tad Cook, K7RA

Seattle, WA October 9, 2009

To all radio amateurs

Sweet memories of that 11-day run of sunspots ending on the second day of this month will eventually fade. So far the number of spotless days is seven--or perhaps eight by later today--with the last sunspot seen on October 1.

A peek at <http://stereo.gsfc.nasa.gov/> for the latest STEREO images shows two active areas in our Sun's southern hemisphere beyond our direct view, but it is hard to tell if these will emerge as sunspots when they appear over the eastern limb. A rough guess has the first one possibly emerging around October 10, and the second around a week later. Currently the solar flux forecast shows flux values lower than 70 through October 15, then around 72 during the two-week period from October 16-30.

The second spot is seen on the look-ahead image, and is passing into the invisible area, now slightly more than 60 degrees wide in latitude, or about one-sixth of the solar surface.

The same NOAA/USAF forecast predicts the same very quiet geomagnetic conditions we've seen for some time, with a planetary A index around 5. Two very small increases are predicted for October 11-12, with an A index of 7, and October 24-25, with the A index at 8.

Average sunspot numbers for the week dropped 15.3 points below the September 24-30 period, and average daily solar flux for the week declined 2.2 points to 70.5.

Regarding the invisible area on the other side of the Sun, this is becoming smaller as the "Ahead and Behind" STEREO platforms slowly converge. You can figure out the size of the dark area in terms of degrees by going to the "Where is STEREO Today?" page at <http://stereo-ssc.nascom.nasa.gov/where.shtml>. The last figure at the bottom of the page is "Separation Angle A with B." Subtract this value from 180 to get the size of the dark area. Currently early Friday morning it shows 119.702, which corresponds with a dark area (beyond the sight of the A and B platforms) of 60.298 degrees.

At <http://stereo-ssc.nascom.nasa.gov/where/> you can see how wide that invisible area will be at any date and time in the future. On October 1 at 1800z the blank area was 61.7 degrees wide, on November 1 it will be 56.3 degrees, and December 1, 51.6 degrees. The non-visible area will be exactly 60 degrees wide around 0021-0028z on October 11.

In 2010 that invisible area will shrink from 47.7 degrees on January 1 to 9.3 degrees on December 1. The entire Sun will be visible beginning on February 6, 2011 around 1302-2047z. After that, the blank spot in STEREO's vision will be Earth-facing, and as it grows the information can be filled in from observation here on Earth.

Larry Banks, W1DYJ of Woburn, Massachusetts sent in an article from New Scientist magazine titled, "Phantom Storms: How our weather leaks into space." It has many interesting details about our ionosphere and stratospheric warming. Read it on the web at, <http://snipr.com/scukl>.

Giles Berry, KE3CR of New Castle, Delaware commented about last week's reports of VHF propagation along fog banks. He recalls that in the early 1950s when television first came to the state of Maine, TV reception seemed to improve with fog. Giles notes that on a foggy night he could receive television broadcasts from Boston reasonably well. He was on the mid coast of Maine.

Patrick Hamel, W5THT of Long Beach, Mississippi notes, "Here on the Gulf of Mexico coast we have always known that when we get fog, we can talk from Florida to Texas 'under the inversion' on 2 meters. It also works on 6 meters, and I regularly heard other stations making contact on 2 meters and then jumping to the higher bands during fog conditions."

Gus Malmberg, SM0EGK says, "When I read WA2AMW's comments about the extraordinary conditions on 2m, I recalled what happened early in 1963, when one could listen to all of northern Europe and see many band I TV stations for a few days. As a youngster I didn't understand the mechanism, but have since realized that it must have been an extreme temperature inversion. In 1963 we had a solar minimum."

He continues, "I worked for fifteen years as a radio and television transmitter engineer for the Swedish Telecommunication Administration, but have never again experienced something like that!"

Alan Vigeant, KI6HPO of San Marcos, California wrote, "I'd like to inform you of past and most recent conditions here in NE San Diego County. Since early April, I've been having daily chats with my good friends at the Santa Barbara Amateur Radio Club, which is situated about 165 miles NW of my QTH."

Alan continues, "I am at 2,200 feet of altitude, on the SW rim of what I like to call the Palomar Ridge, which is about 5,600 feet above sea level. Between the two rims is what I call the 'Palomar Trench.' My QTH is about 12 miles SW of the Palomar Observatory. Using William Hepburn's 'Worldwide Tropospheric Ducting Forecasts web site (see <http://www.dxinfocentre.com/tropo.html>), which has proven most helpful to me, I can pretty much set my watch as to when the duct will be forming. My QTH is about 40 miles east of Oceanside, California. My signal follows the ducting which occurs in the trench and then goes up the coast of Southern California to Santa Cruz Island, where their 220 MHz repeater is."

He goes on to say. "The past week proved to be a most curious one for me. While I was speaking to the 7:00 AM SBARC Morning Net, I noticed that the S-meter on my 220 rig (I utilize the club's 223.920 repeater) began to fluctuate rapidly."

He ends with, "Looking out my garage side door, I could watch the cloud cover come in from the Pacific; as I looked on, I could actually see that as the cloud cover rose, the meter would decline to an S-3. As the Sun grew higher in the sky and the cloud bank began to recede into the Pacific, the meter would register an S-9 to almost 40 over. At times, during the summer evenings, I could look out along the Palomar trench and look to the horizon to see if prop was going to be good or not so good for the evening."

Thanks, Alan! Very interesting report.

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/w1aw/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/w1aw.html#email>.

Sunspot numbers for October 1 through 7 were 11, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, and 0 with a mean of 1.6. 10.7 cm flux was 72, 71.6, 71.6, 71.1, 69.9, 68.9, and 68.5 with a mean of 70.5. Estimated planetary A indices were 2, 2, 1, 4, 2, 1 and 2 with a mean of 2. Estimated mid-latitude A indices were 2, 0, 1, 4, 2, 1 and 1 with a mean of 1.6.