

From the Gavel...



Well spring has sprung. We are on daylight savings time. And yet we are still freezing in our winter jackets while we await warmer temperatures.

Until those temperatures arrive, many of us will warm up with thoughts of the improvements we will be making to our home and mobile radio stations in the coming warmer season. So we go to ham fleamarkets and hamfests to buy the goodies for those improvements. Like the very successful HAM-EX hamfest which our club and the Peel Amateur Radio Club co-operated on March 31st, 2007, culminating, in our area at least, in the Milton Hamfest in early July. For the more adventurous of us, there is in May the humungous Dayton Hamvention and the smaller Rochester hamfest a few weeks later. Our dreams are filled with thoughts of buying new or used new radios and tuners, replacing antennas, antenna switches and coax, or even building some of these items.

And then our thoughts become directed to the summer event of summer events at the end of June: FIELD DAY, a delightful blend of ham operating and outdoor life. Erecting antennas, operating in a tent or RV, a communal outdoor dinner and breakfast, and for the hardier ones sleeping out under the stars (or the clouds). Yes it is a contest event but also a bonding event, where we club members get to know each other, for better or worse. Those who have not operated HF can be enlisted to learn this skill under the tutelage of more experienced members while "under the fire" of contest conditions.

What is especially fun is listening to some of the goofy phonetics some of our U.S. cousins

use: e.g. K4 Big Fat Turkey (K4BFT), K5 YAll,YaAll (K5YY). One year I tried to counter this with VE3 Mama Is Sick (VE3MIS). Anyway it is a hoot. Even the interference we hear on SSB coming from our cw brothers in the next tent, is manageable and viewed with dispassionate but contented resignation, as it is all part of the experience especially when we are under the influence of VE3TKI's witches' brew of cappucino and the indescribable Black Forest cake which tops off the dinner.

This year Field Day will be at the Chappell Estate just off Burnhamthorpe Road west of Creditview Road: a really nice and convenient locale for this event. You can try out your various rig and antenna projects at Field Day. Some will fail. Most will in all probability be successful. It doesn't matter. Participation in a key international ham radio event is the real object here, to train us for an emergency where we would have to operate portable, "in the field", so to speak. So I hope you all will come out and join in the Field Day fun.

The only other matter I would like to mention is that at the time of writing this Gavel, our emergency radio system being set up at Credit Valley Hospital is on its way to completion. We are awaiting antenna and coax installation. This is the fruition of many years of hard work by Sean VA3MED in finally convincing the hospital to come onsite.

Thanks Sean for your efforts.

73 Lorne VE3CXT

This Month

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Sunday Brunch

Sunday brunches are held on the first Sunday of each month. Time is 9:30AM at Shopsy's, 6986 Financial Drive Unit 5 Mississauga (at the corner of Mississauga Rd and Derry Rd). All are welcome to come out and have an opportunity to chat in an informal setting.

Club Nets

2 Metre Tuesday Night Phone Net Join in on the chatter starting at 8:30PM every Tuesday on the club repeater. Hosted by various net controllers. 145.430MHz Tone 103.5 Minus (-) offset. Contact our VHF Net Manager, **Lorne (VE3CXT)**, if interested in becoming a net controller.

75 Metre Sunday Night Net Starts at 8:30PM every Sunday. Hosted by various net controllers. Contact our HF Net Manager, **Michael (VE3TKI)**, if interested in becoming a net controller.

Commentary...



CQ contest CQ contest Victor Echo 3 Mike India Sierra... CQ contest CQ contest Victor Echo 3 Mike India Sierra... This phrase brings warm memories of the 24th of March when VE3MIS took part in the CQ WW WPX Contest.

Most of you will remember your first contest QSO - first trepidation, then finding the nerve to get on the air and finally excitement after the first QSO. Then, more and more QSOs. So much goes on during a contest - choosing the right band for the time of the day, tuning the antenna for the band, deciding whether to run or search & pounce, keeping track of serial numbers, logging every QSO. You have 4 hams in the room and there are 5 ideas of what should be done. And then there is the PC with internet access that spews out its own ideas. Soon all debate stops with no hope of an agreement and attention is turned to a newly donated rig a Yaesu FT101ZD that wouldn't power up. That night I learnt that putting a bunch of hams in a room waiting for their turn at the contest, is a dangerous situation. You've got to give them something to do. So, on this occasion, the FT101 was the center of attraction. Again there were 5 ideas from the 4 hams in the room, to say nothing of the Internet PC in the corner. A power connector was fabricated, the FT101 opened up, the Internet consulted... and then it was time for operator change. So now we had 1 new ham and 3 additional ideas, and the debate started all over again. At this point my brain was getting a bit fuzzy and I knew it was time for me to leave. I must say, we hams know how to have fun. For, indeed, how boring it would have been if someone just fixed the FT101 and got it working without any fuss! I am convinced that if you want to enjoy participating in a contest, the club station is the place to be. No kidding.

Thomas, VA3TMB

Executive Directors

President: Dave Harford, VA3DFH
 1st Vice President: William Bressette, VE3WPJ
 2nd Vice President: Thomas Godden, VE3TWG
 Treasurer: John (Sr) Lorenc, VA3XJL
 Secretary: Tony Champion, VA3QC
 Past President: Robin Stubbs, VE3VVS

Club Managers

Membership Manager: Reg Vertolli, VA3JQA
 Education Manager: Earle Laycock, VE3XEL
 Practical Radio Labs: Reg Vertolli, VA3JQA
 CW Courses: Tony Champion, VA3QC
 House / Visitor Host Manager: Robert Humpherys, VE3HOW
 Newsletter Editor: Thomas Bernard, VA3TMB
 Researcher: Kim Cheong, VE3KTC
 Net Managers HF Net: Michael Brickell, VE3TKI
 VHF Net: Lorne Jackson, VE3CXT
 Repeater Manager: Michael Brickell, VE3TKI
 Assistant: Dave Harford, VA3DFH
 Assistant: Bryan Jay, VA3BLJ
 Assistant: Bob Boyer, VE3XBB
 Assistant: Lorne Jackson, VE3CXT
 Assistant: John Duffy, VE3DRZ
 Assistant: Asim Zaidi, VE3XAP
 Assistant: Tony Champion, VA3QC
 Assistant: Robin Stubbs, VE3VVS
 Club Station Manager: Brian Jay, VA3BLJ
 Assistant: Rick Brown, VE3IMG
 Field Day Manager: Thomas Godden, VE3TWG
 Assistant - Documentation: Tony Champion, VA3QC
 Assistant - Logging: Jody Levine, VE3ION
 Assistant - Refreshments: John Duffy, VE3DRZ
 Assistant - Site: Thomas Godden, VE3TWG
 Assistant - Press and Publications: Reg Vertolli, VA3JQA
 FSV Manager: Robin Stubbs, VE3VVS
 Assistant: Sean Conlin, VA3MED
 Assistant: William Bressette, VE3WPJ
 Programs Manager: Lorne Jackson, VE3CXT
 Webmaster Source Code and Database: Dave Harford, VA3DFH
 Graphical Design and CSS: Alex Malikov, VE3MA
 Legal Consultant: Lorne Jackson, VE3CXT

Audit Committee

Auditors Coordinator: John Duffy, VE3DRZ
 Database: Lorne Jackson, VE3CXT
 Assistant: Robert Humpherys, VE3HOW
 Assistant - Physical: Sohail Anjum, VE3ITU
 Public Service
 ARES Emergency Coordinator: Sean Conlin, VA3MED
 Assistant EC 1: William Bressette, VE3WPJ
 Assistant EC 2: Michael Brickell, VE3TKI
 Assistant EC 3: Lorne Jackson, VE3CXT
 Assistant EC 4: Bob Boyer, VE3XBB
 Assistant EC 5: Dave Stubbs, VA3BHF
 Assistant EC 6: John Duffy, VE3DRZ
 Assistant EC B/U: Dave Harford, VA3DFH
 Assistant EC B/U: Robin Stubbs, VE3VVS
 Assistant EC B/U: Robert Giddy, VE3IAB
 CANWARN Manager: Peter Mosher, VA3PKM
 Special Events / Walks Manager: Bob Boyer, VE3XBB

SIGs : Special Interest Groups

Contests Manager: Rick Brown, VE3IMG
 Assistant: Alex Malikov, VE3MA
 Assistant: Asim Zaidi, VE3XAP
 Digital Group / HSMM Manager: Dave Stubbs, VA3BHF
 Assistant: Robin Stubbs, VE3VVS
 Assistant: William Bressette, VE3WPJ
 Assistant: Dave Harford, VA3DFH
 QSL Assistant - Certificates and Photos: Reg Vertolli, VA3JQA
 Manager: Michael Brickell, VE3TKI

CLUB CALENDAR FOR 2007

March, 2007

31 Sat Ham-Ex 2007

April, 2007

01 Sun Sunday Brunch - Shopsy's

07 Sat SP DX Contest

08 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

10 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

12 Thu Club Meeting

15 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

17 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

19 Thu Radio Night at Club Station

21 Sat Ontario QSO Party

22 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

24 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

26 Thu Club Meeting

29 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

Provisional Schedule Below...

May, 2007

01 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

03 Thu Exec Meeting

05 Sat Toronto Area CANWARN Training

05 Sat ARI International DX Contest

06 Sun Sunday Brunch - Shopsy's

06 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

08 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

10 Thu Club Meeting

13 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

15 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

17 Thu Radio Night at Club Station

20 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

22 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

24 Thu Club Meeting

25 Fri CQ WW WPX Contest

27 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

29 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

June, 2007

03 Sun Sunday Brunch - Shopsy's

03 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

05 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

07 Thu Exec Meeting

10 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

12 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

14 Thu Club Meeting

17 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

19 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

21 Thu ARES Meeting

23 Sat ARRL Field Day Contest

24 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

26 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

28 Thu Club Meeting

July, 2007

01 Sun Sunday Brunch - Shopsy's

01 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

03 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

08 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

10 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

15 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

17 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

22 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

24 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

29 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

31 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

August, 2007

05 Sun Sunday Brunch - Shopsy's

05 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

07 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

12 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

14 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

19 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

21 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

26 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

28 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

September, 2007

02 Sun Sunday Brunch - Shopsy's

02 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

04 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

06 Thu Exec Meeting

09 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

11 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

13 Thu Club Meeting

16 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

18 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

20 Thu Radio Night at Club Station

23 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

25 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Metre Net

27 Thu Club Meeting

30 Sun HF - 75/80 Metre Net

NOTES

1. Meetings start 7:30PM at St. Thomas A Becket Church Hall, 3535 South Common Court unless otherwise noted.
2. Brunch is at 9:30AM unless otherwise noted.
3. Classes are from 7:00PM - 9:00PM at Meals On Wheels at 2445 Dunwin Drive

Visit our website: <http://www.marc.on.ca> for any updates of the calendar.

The Gary McPherson Story

By **Kim Cheong - VE3KTC**

In the March newsletter, the theme was about trying to get young people interested in amateur radio as a rewarding hobby. During my research, I came across on the Internet a story about an amazing, incredible individual, Gary McPherson. You may ask: "What does amateur radio, the younger generation, and Gary McPherson have in common?"

Gary McPherson was born on June 28, 1946 in Edsen, Alberta. At the age of 6, his family moved to Swift River, Yukon Territory. He lead a normal childhood until he was afflicted with polio at the age of 8 during a family visit to Edmonton, Alberta on October 2, 1955. In the 1950's, polio was a feared disease that paralyzed Canada, especially young children and their family. It wasn't until 1955 that the polio immunization program began, which started a decline in the disease. Unfortunately, Gary's family lived in the Yukon before the polio vaccine program began. He never received the polio vaccination shot.

Eventually, Gary was hospitalized during his early childhood years in order to be properly treated from complications related to polio (i.e. breathing problems). Because of Gary's medical condition, the family was under tremendous stress trying to pay "the medical bills" for Gary's hospitalization. One must remember, this was the 1950's, and Canada did not have a National Health Insurance Program (Medicare) as we take for granted today. The family moved from the Yukon back to Edmonton to be closed to Gary, who was receiving treatment and living at the University Hospital. It will not be until October 19, 1989 that he will leave University Hospital.

For Gary McPherson, struck with polio at a young age, and hospitalized in order to receive the best treatment, one might think that "this is the end of the world". On the contrary, it is the beginning of a journey that will see him achieve personal accomplishments, volunteerism/community service and political awareness/involvement for people with physical disabilities. And this all began with amateur radio!

In 1964, at age 18 and living at the University Hospital, Gary read about amateur radio in "The Toomey J.

Gazette", an international magazine about polio survivors. His interest in amateur radio lead him to become a ham radio operator that year, along with three of his roommates, who were also polio patients at the University Hospital. A club station was setup under the direction/supervision of Dr. Frank Haley-VE6RD, who was the one of the hospital anesthesiologist. Because of Gary and his 3 roommate's medical condition, they were not able to physically maintain the radio station themselves. Dr. Haley became their club sponsor, for it was a requirement in order for the radio station to legally maintain/operate in a hospital environment.

As Gary would put it in his email to me about his amateur radio experience: "Amateur radio literally opened up a whole new world to me, and gave me the inspiration and motivation to continue to do the things and challenge me". From this experience, he and his 3 roommates spoke to about 300 countries within a few years. Eventually, in the latter years, his 3 roommates moved on to do other commitments in their lives. For Gary amateur radio lead to his involvement in wheelchair sports.

One of Gary's closest friends, Peter Steadward, remembers Gary in a special way. In 1968, Peter Steadward, a university student at that time, who was also on the national committee involved in organizing the 1968 National Wheelchair Games, was looking for help from people who had access to ham radio. With little government funding at that time, most of the interprovincial work was done through Canada's postal service(Canada Post as we know it today). A postal strike took place in early 1968, putting the games in jeopardy. Peter found out about Gary, his roommate, and their involvement with ham radio. It was through Peter, Gary and other ham radio operators like them, their dedication and commitment, which made the 1968 National Wheelchair Games a reality. Because of Gary participation in helping Peter and the 1968 National Wheelchair games, he received the Certificate of Merit from the wheelchair sports organization for providing alternate communication links during the 1968 postal strike. Peter describes Gary's natural leadership, creativity, and organizational skills this way: "Whenever I went in on a Sunday to do those ham radio sessions. I was always amazed at his steel-trap mind.

Everybody remembers people-but he remembered numbers and places and times and dates of things that most people would never be able to remember”.

Through time, Gary would use his acquired skills as a ham radio operator to be involved with various community services, volunteerism, and political activism for people with physical disabilities. He sent more than 20 years involved with wheelchair sports administration. During that 20 year span, he was President of the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association(CWSA) for 8 years. In addition, he has contributed to the sporting community of Alberta, where this lead to his induction to both the Edmonton and Alberta Sports Hall of Fame. On December 5, 2005, Gary was named one of the Century’s top 100 contributors to sports in Alberta.

The University of Alberta Senate awarded Gary an Honorary Doctorate of Law Degree for his community service on November 16th, 1995. On February 20, 2004, he received the Order of Canada from the Governor General of Canada(Adrienne Clarkson) for his various community service. The Edmonton Centennial Organizing Committee selected Gary McPherson as the top 100 Edmontonians of the Century on May 3, 2004.

In June of 1998, Gary became the Executive Director of the Canadian Centre for Social Entrepreneurship(CCSE), School of Business, University of Alberta. He is also an Adjunct Professor, Special Lecturer and Advisor in the

Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation at the university. Before joining the University of Alberta, he was chairman of the Alberta Premier’s Council on the Status of Person with Disabilities for 10 years, providing advice on disability/access for the physical disabled to the Alberta government.

In 2000, Gary wrote a book about personal and self responsibility titled “With Every Breath I Take”. The University of Alberta Press published his biography, titled: “Rolling On”-authored Gary Hawkins, Canmore, Alberta) in December, 2003.

Gary is married to Valerie Kamitomo. The couple have two children, and live in Edmonton, Alberta.

It is because of his amateur radio experience at a young age and his determination, commitment, perseverance, and his “never give up on life” attitude, Gary McPherson is an example of “One’s Ability, and Not Disability” that makes the phrase “Live Life To The Fullest” meaningful for all of us.

From

<http://www.enablelink.org/MakeADif/McPherson/McPherson.htm> and <http://www.garymcperson.com>

What is DXing? (<http://www.dxl.com/dxing.html>)

Basically, DXing is listening to the radio. Not switching to your local Home of the Hits, of course - what the hobby is all about is sifting the airwaves for distant and hard-to-hear signals. DX listeners (DXers) mostly listen out for regular radio (broadcast) stations, and should not be confused with radio amateurs (hams). DX listeners do not possess any kind of transmitting equipment or talk to each other on the air.

There are probably as many ways of practising the hobby as there are DXers. Some are simply in it for the rich pickings of news, views, music, culture and languages available on the international bands, where a number of interesting services can be picked up with even the most basic of shortwave radios. Be it a news bulletin from Lithuania, this week’s West-African charts or commentary on the latest cricket test - it’s all there for your enlightenment, enjoyment and education.

But most DXers are even more fascinated by those stations which are anything but easy to hear. They will spend their income on expensive communications receivers, drain their ingenuity on elaborate antenna schemes and test the tolerance of their loved ones by staying glued to the radio in perpetual search for those elusive, distant signals - more often than not in the middle of the night.

Listening on long-, medium- and shortwave is not at all like surfing on

the internet or receiving satellite broadcasts. Reception conditions vary from day to day, even from minute to minute. Skill, knowledge and endurance is required if the DXer is to catch his Penny Black, his own personal Mona Lisa. Which to most DXers is likely to be a low-powered local station in some faraway corner of the globe, successfully managing to propagate the distance involved only once every few years or so.

That's what the «DX» in DXing actually means, by the way - the unknown distance, or «Distance X». It's radio amateur code, originally, as is another term of some importance to most DXers: QSL, meaning «I confirm».

Having captured a faint signal, the ardent DXer will write the station concerned a so-called reception report, detailing reception conditions and listing sufficient programme details for the

station to check on the authenticity of his report.. In return, the DXer requests a QSL from the station - usually a special card or letter specifying that reception has taken place. Such QSLs are collected and highly treasured by the DXer, and the number of stations or countries QSLed remains source of rivalry between fellow hobbyists.

Some radio stations find reception reports from DXers a useful source of technical information, others may appreciate the feedback on programme contents provided by some correspondents. But to an increasing number, the mail generated by the DX-community has little but novelty value. DXers, one suspects, are to radio stations what trainspotters are to railway companies...

Different DXers have different preferences and specialize in different fields of the hobby. In the Nordic

countries, the dark winter months provide an ideal opportunity for catching transatlantic and other distant stations on medium wave. Central and South America, with its multitude of small stations, is another favoured field. Be it merengue or salsa from a Caribbean coast, or crisp kena flute from a cool Andean hillside - not forgetting those "goooooooooooooooools" from some hotly contested copa - once smitten, you're addicted for life.

There's Africa, Asia and the Pacific, too - and plenty more besides. The world being rather a big place, there is everything to choose from. And in the wonderful world of radio, the DXer has it all at his fingertips.

If you have any questions about DXing, please feel free to mail us at dxn@dxlc.com.

Contest Corner - 2006 RAC Winter Contest

Rick Brown (VE3IMG) – Contest Manager

As I sit down to write this article, the 2006 RAC Winter Contest has just completed only hours ago. CQs and CW signals are still going off in my head. After 24 hours of competition, the adrenaline is still flowing and I find myself checking out the contest website for the next event. Like a junkie, I am in need of another fix.

At the start of the contest, 20 meters was dead. Propagation was limited to the lower bands and we only able to work Ontario and the east coast. Later in the evening we did not see much action from the west on 80 meters as

expected. We were off to a slow start. In the morning 20 meters opened up and conditions improved immensely. We were able to work all provinces and a few territories on 20 meters. We even saw some action on 15 meters in the afternoon. By the end of the contest, we had exceeded last years total by at least 200 contacts.

For those of you not familiar with this contest, it is sponsored by the Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC). It is an annual event which usually takes place in the last week of December. The objective is to work as many Canadian stations as possible. Canadian contacts are worth 10

points, as opposed to U.S. or DX stations which are only worth 2. Special RAC stations for each province or territory, e.g. VA3RAC, are worth 20 points. This is a mixed contest, where phone and cw are permitted. For each new province or Territory worked on phone or cw per band, counts as a multiplier. For example, if we worked 10 provinces on ssb and 8 on cw for each of the 5 bands, our total score would increase by a factor of $(10 + 8) \times 5 = 90$. Fortunately the logging program we use keeps track of this math!

There are various categories amateurs can compete in, e.g. Single Operator All Bands (SOAB) or Multi-Op Low Power (MOLP) to name a few. For a complete set of rules, categories and awards, check out the following web link - <http://www.rac.ca/downloads/canwin2006.pdf>.

Our club sponsors the award for the Multi-Operator Low Power (MOLP) category. The photograph shows the contest



team holding the award it won in last years 2005 RAC Winter contest.

As we exceeded last year's results, we have a good chance of winning again. The results for this contest will be published in TCA magazine (A RAC publication) in Nov/Dec issue.

Contest Corner - MARC Contesting Guidelines

Rick Brown (VE3IMG) – Contest Manager

I would like to take this opportunity to discuss our contest rating system and operating policy. I would encourage you to view the club's contest calendar at

http://www.marc.on.ca/marc/events/events_contests.asp for up coming contests we plan to work. You will find links to the contest rules there as well.

You will notice on the club calendar that the contests are rated on a scale of 1 to 3. Contests that are rated a 1 are high profile and highly competitive contests where the club is generally trying to win awards. Prime hours of operation for the running station will generally be restricted to experienced operators by a predetermined schedule. Newbies will generally find these contests intimidating to operate in because of crowded conditions and pace of the contest.

Contests rated a 2 are medium size contests where the club is not so concerned about winning. There would be more opportunity for inexperienced contesters to operate the running station. Operating the running station may be challenging, but not overwhelming.

Contests rated 3 are generally low profile and less structured. We would only operate these contests if there were enough interest. These would be "no pressure" contests.

In contests that permit the use of a multiplier station, less experienced operators would be encourage to work this position as it will be used to run search and pounce.

In case you were wondering, the difference between running, and search and pounce is as follows. Running means that you are calling CQ. Logging rates of

100 to 200 contacts an hour are not uncommon in a busy contest. You would be faced with many people calling you at the same time. Logging and handling qsos efficiently will be challenging. With search and pounce, you are tuning across the band looking for multipliers or stations calling CQ. Logging rates are slower, typically under 40 qsos per hour.

All club members are welcome to participate in any contest. We are more than willing to train as required. Contact me by email or at the meeting if you want to get involved in contesting We will include you in any planning sessions going forward.

Amateur Radio Contesting FAQ (http://www.qsl.net/zs1an/contesting_faq.html)

1. Why take part in contests?

Everyone has their own reasons. Some of mine are: to sharpen my operating skills, to learn to get the most I can out of my equipment, to compete against my peers, to be a part of the community of contesters.

2. How is the winner determined?

The winner in each category is the station which gets the most points in that category.

3. How are points scored?

Each QSO will score a certain number of points. The number of points scored for a QSO may depend on the location of the station contacted - for example in the CQ Worldwide DX contest stations on the same continent as yourself count 1 point each, stations on a different continent count 3 points and contacts between two stations both located in North America count 2 points. In other contests, QSOs for certain stations may count for more points than QSOs with others - for example, in the ARRL 10m contest, contacts with stations holding Novice or Technician Plus class licenses count more than contacts with other license classes. In contests which allow you to work in different modes (for example, CW and SSB) the number of points may also depend on the mode.

4. What bands can be used during contests?

That depends on the particular contest. Some contests are limited so a single band - for example, the ARRL 10m contest is (not surprisingly) for 10m only. Many contests allow operation on all the pre-WARC HF bands - that is: 160m, 80m, 40m, 20m, 15m and 10m. Other contests are for VHF bands only. However note that contesting is never permitted on the WARC bands: 30m,

17m and 12m. This is so that amateurs who do not enjoy contesting can take refuge on the WARC bands during contests.

5. Why are there different entry categories?

Different contesters have different preferences and budgets. Some like to work on their own, others prefer to be part of a team. Some can afford high-power stations, others prefer to compete with a "barefoot" or QRP transceiver. By dividing a single contest into a number of different entry categories, all contesters can share the fun and contribute to the contest, while competing against similarly equipped stations in the same category.

6. I have a limited budget. What should I spend it on?

Assuming you already have a basic station, then I would suggest you first purchase a computer (which does not have to be new, especially if you are happy to use DOS) for logging; then upgrade your antennas; then upgrade your rig if necessary; and save the linear for last since most contests have a 100W category. If your plan to enter CW contests, then you might want to invest in a narrow filter (maximum 500 Hz) for your existing rig in the meantime, even if you plan to buy a new contesting rig in a year or two. Other people's opinions will differ.

7. Why do contesters only exchange reports and other numbers, not name and QTH?

The object is to make as many QSOs as possible in a limited time, so "QSO rate" - the number of QSOs per hour - is (almost) everything. Hence all "unnecessary" parts of the QSO are omitted, leaving only the required essentials - call signs, 599 signal reports and a serial number or zone number if required by the rules. Be sure to

check the rules to see what the required exchange is for each contest you enter.

8. How do I send my report?

You can just send the report followed by the zone or serial number. For example, "599T5". Here you are sending the CQ zone "5" as "T5", with "T" replacing the "0". It is not necessary to send your callsign again if the station you called has got it right. If they got your callsign wrong, then you should send it again a couple of times with your report - for example, "N1XXX N1XXX 599T5".

9. What is a serial number?

Many contests require that, in addition to the signal report, you send a serial number as part of the report. This is simply a number, starting from 1, which you increment with each successive contact. Serial numbers are usually sent as 3 or 4 digit numbers, with the letter "T" (a single dash) being sent in place of leading zeroes. For example, "T23" for "23". Most contests require that you use a single sequence on all bands if you are a single operator (so for example, if you send "23" to the last station you work on 20m, and then move to 15m you would send "24" to the first station worked there). Multi-operator stations are often required to use a separate sequence on each band. Check the rules to be sure.

10. How do I find out what contests are on?

Visit the Contest Calendar website maintained by Bruce Horn WA7BNM.

The Roving Reporter

We have started a new series of articles for the Communicator called The Roving Reporter. Every month we will interview one or two club members and publish the interviews here. This month The Roving Reporter interviewed Asim Zaidi VE3XAP & Tony Champion VA3QC.

Asim VE3XAP

RR: I know you have been at this for a very long time. Tell me how all this started, Asim.

VE3XAP: When I was 6 or 7 years old my grandfather had a radio that worked on AC, and it was plugged into the wall. I was amazed how the voice came from the wall. Then when I was 12, my father bought a transistor radio – with no wires! This puzzled me further. Imagine a teenager who thought he knew everything but could not figure out how the thing ‘works’ I wondered where the voice was coming from. This was a pretty good German radio –Braun. I used to stay up late nights and listen to BBC, Voice of America and the South American HCJB from Quito, Ecuador. With a long wire on the roof, I managed to pick up European stations such as Radio Luxemburg and others that were on AM (medium wave we called it) . It was fascinating.

These stations kept asking for signal reports. I wrote to them and BBC, VOA & HCJB sent me QSL cards! Radio Netherlands was a real treasure for shortwave listeners and ham radio operators. Their weekly shortwave broadcast had 5 to 10 minute segments for ham radio. I had no clue what they were talking about, but it piqued my interest. I wanted to find out more about ham radio. But that was the extent of my knowledge. This hobby in that part of the world was like the 8th wonder.

It was not until I was 19 or 20 , I went to visit a friend of mine. His father had a super doper Hi-Fi set and I went there to

listen to music. There I saw the first of many ARRL handbooks. Flipping through it, ads. for Heathkit, Collins and other kits caught my eye. My next visit was to the American library with a friend, who was also interested in this stuff, and borrowed the ARRL handbook and some ham magazines. I did not understand what this was as there were no clubs or other hams around. So my friend and I started tinkering with components and built an audio amplifier instead. We used it in the car to play music from an old hand held tape recorder. By the time I graduated, I had a very good understanding of electronics. As fate would have it, one of the instructors had a ‘high end’ Sony radio that could receive SSB. He was kind enough to allow me to

use it. Having the details on where to listen I tuned up on 20m. I heard a strong signal. This was a LOCAL. I copied his call. I then looked up his call sign, found his address. I went to his house to see him. Thus began the era of ham radio for me. By then I had already read a lot about the hobby. He was a great mentor. Very helpful and I owe my indulgence in this hobby to him.

Shortly after that, I was visiting an uncle. Across from his house, I saw a huge antenna (triband Quad). This person happened to be a friend of my uncle. When he heard that I was an inquisitive youngster, he invited me over for an evening on the air. This one evening turned into many evenings and I made a number of contacts on a Yeasu FT200. This was the year 1975-76 He guided me through the process of getting licensed. So my father and I both took the test and a 13 wpm Morse exam. It took almost a year to

get the clearance from various agencies and lots of references to get the license. It is much quicker now. Now I had a call sign but no radio at this point. I had started working by now and saved up for a year, flew to Singapore and bought a FT101E which was the top of the line rig at that time. Actually carried it back in a shoulder bag... heavy rig (33lbs). That was 1981. I put up a dipole at 33 feet. There was no tower and so I used a 33 feet tall bamboo instead. We lived by the sea and so had a good conductive ground and no obstacles to the south. I worked DX every evening after work. The sunspots were active and I worked 20 meters to Europe, East and West coast US, the Far East, India & Sri Lanka. What a Thrill.

Later I moved to Saudi Arabia for work. Soon after, got married and the kids came early. Ham radio was now on the sidelines. But then, once you get bitten by the bug, it is hard to get over it. Luckily, I was part of a group of people running a BBS (now that tells my age). Running the Bulletin board service was a replacement for ham radio, one of the group members (Dave) one day saw the TGM Hybrid quad on the roof. He came knocking. I used to listen to 20m and other ham bands but did not have the licence to operate. From him I heard that a group of expatriates were forming a radio club. In

about 2 months Dave K2XR, and 4 others, were operating 7Z2AB from the US Consulate in Jeddah. Four years of operating from there was spectacular. We were DXing and there was always a pile up. Many contests and many hours of putting up new and bigger antennas were invigorating. The station was shut down after the radio operator was transferred.

During my stint in Saudi, trips to home were frequent. This allowed me to operate from AP as well. Having new knowledge and experience I decided upgrade my station. On a trip to the US I visited the KLM factory in Morgan Hill Ca.. Bought 2 big KLM HF antennas and shipped them back home. On a subsequent visit to home, plagiarized the design for a Rohn 45 and had one of the locals fabricate a 40-foot tower for the antennas. By now I had convinced one of my father's colleague, visiting Japan, to pick up a IC-751 Icom radio and bring it in his baggage. The story goes on but let's see if it unfolds by way of your next question.

RR: That is an interesting recap of your journey, Asim. What aspect of ham radio are you most interested in?

VE3XAP: This hobby offers many facets. Maturing in this hobby requires patience and perseverance. This has to come from 'inside'. I have always been interested in contesting. It is a competition of endurance and strategy. Additionally, there are multiple areas that come into play when you sit down to run a contest. You need to know about propagation, grey line, time zone differences, solar activity, amongst a slew of other operating practices and use of equipment, antennas and their properties, height above ground, logging software etc. As you can see that contesting is not just '59 Ontario'. Organizing, planning and designing a

good contest station has a high of its own. This is what my friend Dave, K2XR and I have done in New Jersey. I go there to get on the air, once in a while. That is one great contest site. Contest are something you are either interested in or you are not. But once you are catch the bug you are hooked.

I joined MARC in 1997. At that time I was working at the same place as Earle ve3xel and Neil VA3NAA. It was with Earle's help that I got my Canadian license. Working through the ranks, I was fortunate to become the club station manager, for MIS at the Scout hall. We formed a contest group. The contest group made some exceptional inroads into the Canadian contest arena. It was important from my perspective, as this was a great venue to promote the club name. Even though the club did not have sufficient funds at that time, nor were we involved in HAMEX then, but we still had a very decent station on a small budget. Thanks to the Exec's at that time. I believe they realized that MIS on the air was a good thing for the hobby in Mississauga. My thanks also to all the other contest group members who supported and helped in many ways. .

RR: You have used various equipments so far. What equipment do you have in Canada now?

VE3XAP: Nothing fancy; a modest setup. Yeasu all mode FT847. An HF vertical for 80m to 10m, and a multi band vertical for VHF, UHF and 6m. Also a 5-element beam for 6m. I am happy with this setup, does all bands all modes with a small footprint. What good is a Ferrari if there is no complimenting track to burn rubber?

RR: Well said, Asim. What plans do you have for the future?

VE3XAP: That is a tough one. Over the years, I find that one's interest depends on your peers. I find it is best to be aligned with the interest of others in the club. I like to follow the path of least resistance. That way you are exposed to one facet at a time, work on it and then move on. It has its mystery.

RR: Do you have a quote for our members?

VE3XAP: As a member of the club, if you want something done, take the initiative and do it yourself. Don't expect others to do it for you!

Tony VA3QC

RR: When and why did all this interest in Amateur Radio begin, Tony?

VA3QC: This all started many moons ago. My dad has been a ham since 1936 originally having the call VE2MZ. That means he has been a ham for over 70 years! I vaguely remember a huge black box that was his transmitter. It was probably a homebrew, and I recall a receiver of some sort. This fascinated me. There was no TV in the early 50's, not in Quebec City anyway, and I remember sitting around the radio listening to shows such as Jack Benny.

In my teens, I became interested in shortwave listening. He gave me a kit one Christmas and we built it together, although I think he did most of the work. I listened to Radio Moscow, the BBC, Voice of America and Radio Luxemburg amongst others. I was interested in becoming a ham back then, but

wasn't aware of where to go to learn the basics and to learn cw.

I moved to Montreal in 1966. Then I got married, had kids etc and ham radio was put on a shelf, although I did own several CB sets in the '70's which I modified to operate out of band which is not legal of course. The bug hit me once again. CB was OK, but ham radio was the "real" thing. In those days I travelled throughout Canada for my job, so studying was not really feasible particularly on some the projects I worked on due to overtime etc.

In 1986 my family and I moved to Mississauga. In 1991 or 1992 I decided to get my license. I took classes at Sheridan College in Brampton. Don Browning VE3CBA was a lecturer there and he ran ham classes. I passed my Basic exam and of course was very pleased with my accomplishment. But I didn't do much until my retirement in 1997. A year before that, I joined the Mississauga Amateur Radio Club (MARC). I took the 5 WPM code exam and later the 12 WPM exam. A couple of years later, I got my advanced license.

I have been very active with MARC since that time. I started publishing the club newsletter and then took on the role of Club Secretary, got involved with field day and a whole slew of other things. In the past couple of years I have had to cut back some as my wife suffers from MS thereby needing me for support at home.

RR: So what interesting things have occurred to you on the air?

VA3QC: For a number of years my dad, VE9AG and I had a daily sked and we'd meet on 40M to keep in touch. At one point someone by the name of John, VE3EWJ, joined us. One day dad and I were talking about Quebec City and

John asked if we were from there. I told him we were both born and raised there. It turned out that John's wife is also from Quebec City and went to the same school as I did. In fact, her younger brother was in my class. So I got the details and contacted him in Victoria after 40 years! Ham radio made this possible!

Later I discovered that John worked for the same company as my neighbour and that another Quebecker worked there too by the name of Joel. Joel and I had been in the same grade and class from about grade 4 and had lost contact after we graduated. Joel's older sister also happened to be an old high school friend John's wife. They had lost touch over the years. To cut a longer story short once again amateur radio brought 4 old friends together after 40 plus years. It's a small world sometimes!

RR: So, what is it about ham that you are interested in?

VA3QC: I enjoy Dxing and ragchewing on the air. To a lesser extent, I like to try out new technologies that marry amateur radio to the computer. I have a PSK232B that I want to connect. I love mobile too. Once while I was driving back from New Brunswick, I contacted a ham in the UK who was also mobile and driving to work up the coast of England. We had a very long mobile-to-mobile chat on 20m.

On another occasion, from home I contacted a ham operating from a freighter going up the west coast of Africa ("mickey mouse" or maritime mobile). I kept in touch with him over three days as he travelled up the coast and I plotted his progress on a map.

I once worked a special event aboard the museum warship, The Haida. She had been retired from the Canadian Navy and was moored at Ontario Place at the time. That was my first experience at being on the receiving end of a pileup! I was on the

air for over an hour taking calls one after another. What a thrill that was!

I have worked Brazil, the US, UK, Czech Republic, Ukraine, Russia, Central Africa, Argentina, Caribbean, Jamaica and many other places. I am still working, not too diligently, at getting my DX award.

RR: What do you have in your shack and in your car, Tony?

VA3QC: I have an IC-756PRO, an Icom IC-2KL 500 watt linear amplifier and an Icom IC AT-500 automatic antenna tuner. The power supply is a RS-300, not sure of the make. My antenna is an Alpha-Delta DX-CC stretched across the backyards of several of my very understanding neighbours! I run 500w off this antenna. I have put three low pass filters on this system to keep interference low. In addition, I have a star based grounding system with a 9 foot copper rod staked into the ground. Grounding is one of the mystery arts and in my opinion a very important part in operating a clean, interference free station.

I have an IC-706 in the car with an AH-2 antenna tuner and a 10-foot whip. I also have a Yaesu FT-8800 but have not yet decided whether to install it in the car or house. I presently have a TS-251 for 2M in the house.

RR: Are you planning to make any changes to your equipment or operations?

VA3QC: Ultimately yes. I would love to own an IC-7000 for the car and install APRS too. I will be

hooking up my packet system. I have been thinking of making an interface to send CW over the repeater as a teaching/practice aid. That could benefit all who wish to either learn or improve their skills at cw. Once I am ready a decision on a suitable time will have to

be discussed with the executive. I would suggest that text would come from previous copies of the club newsletter so that people could self correct their copy.

RR: Do you have any comments to make?

VA3QC: This is a great hobby and a great club. I have made some very good friends over the air and through this club. I would encourage all to take an active role in its running. Come out to meetings and take part in the activities. As in anything else, one benefits from what one puts into it.

Announcements

For Sale

Kenwood TS 820S transceiver

AEA Isolooop antenna

Bencher paddle

Tuner

All for \$450, contact Wilbert Back, VE3NID, 905-824-8402

Breaking news

Ham-Ex 2007, held on Saturday March 31, 2007, was another great success for the Mississauga and Peel Amateur Radio Clubs. The MARC share of the Hamex 2007 profits (which are shared equally between the clubs) is \$2766.45. The club table sales revenue was \$527.25, so the total income for the club is \$3293.70, very close to last year's total of \$3285. The MARC Steering Committee, Michael VE3TKI, and Lorne VE3CXT, would like to thank all those who worked so hard on the day to create this success, and all the club members who came out and supported Hamex by attending.

The prizewinners are:

Grand Prize (\$1000 Gift Certificate) from Radioworld: Chuck Palmer VE3AZA

Icom IC-2200H + UT118 Digital/Analog VHF DStar radio from Icom/Radioworld: Bob Knowles VA3IL

MFJ-403P CW Keyer and Paddle from Durham Radio: Dennis Tabbert VA3DLJ

Zeus Surge Protector from Maple Leaf Communications: George Van Ryssen VA3GVR

4:1 Balun from Maple Leaf Communications: Andrew Wolczanski VE3AWF

1/2 Hour Golf Lesson - Andy Bathgate Golf Centre: Lyle Harris KB8VTO

ODXA Membership: Brad Ford VE3SLI

ODXA Membership: Francis Meyers VE3GWV

\$250 Gift Certificate - MacFarlanes Electronics: Larry Asp VE3RF

RAC Membership: Doug Smyth - Tillsonburg, ON

Fluke Cap compliments of Peter Taylor VE3DRS (Fluke Distributor): William Breaker, Bob Chandler VE3SRE

BBQ Tool Set compliments of Peter Taylor VE3DRS (Fluke Distributor): Bob Morton VE3BFM

\$50 GC towards any Antenna compliments of Degen Designs: Jim Riach VE3DSR

Anli VHF 5/8 wave Antenna compliments of Radioworld: Joe Sokolowski VA3SOK

Anli VHF 5/8 wave Antenna compliments of Radioworld: Don McPhee VA3BOW



THE VOICE OF AMATEUR RADIO IN MISSISSAUGA COMMUNICATOR



VE3MIS/VE3RCX

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RAC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/SUBSCRIPTION TO TCA MAGAZINE

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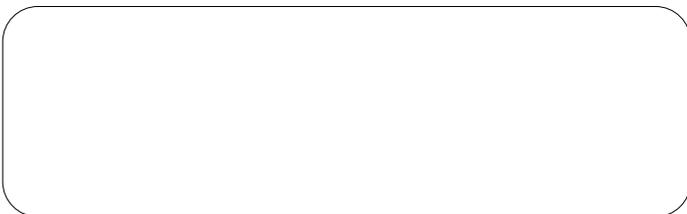
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