

JUNE 1996



JUNE MEETING:

June 12, 7:30 pm, Keefer Room,
RMOG HQ, 111 Lisgar St,
Programme: Elections

GROUNDWAVE

NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1996



Club Call VE3RC

Repeater VE2CRA

VE3LXN

Official Bulletin of the Ottawa Amateur Radio Club, Inc.

The Ottawa Amateur Radio Club, Inc., Box 8873, Ottawa, Ont., K1G 3J2

President	Richard Hagemeyer, VE3UNW	225-3275	953-0638
Vice-President	John Connor, VE3TG		
Secretary	Larry Woran, VE3WLN	835-2959	954-7322
Treasurer	George Roach, VE3BNO	234-0885	738-2372
Past-President	Roger Swickis, VE3BZR	234-9836	228-6310
Directors	Peter Hafichuck, VE3LBW		
	Bob Peterson, VE3IDG	825-7070	952-2443
Packet Group Chair	Bob Peterson, VE3IDG	825-7070	952-2443
Repeater Chair	Harrie Jones, VE3HYS	739-9365	738-2372
Net Manager	Wayne Greenough, VE3JSQ	836-5320	724-5464
EMI Committee Chair	Ralph Cameron, VE3BBM	825-1634	225-2850
Membership Chair	Chris John, VE3FID		
Nat. Cap. Award Manager	Brian Summers, VE3JKZ	523-1535	738-6263
Publicity	Mike Pilon, VE3BUP	731-1567	
Groundwave Editor	Ed Sieb, VA3ES	738-8924	
Graphic Designer	Maria Townson, VE3KIP	828-9573	
Production Committee	Paul Campbell, VE3CEP	733-0148	
	Ted May, VE3ADZ	741-0862	
Delegated Examiners	Richard Hagemeyer, VE3UNW	225-3275	953-0638
	Mike Kelly, VE3FFK		788-2600
Coffee Guy			

THE OTTAWA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB, INC. is an association of Radio Amateurs devoted to the promotion of interest in Amateur Radio communications in the National Capital Area; and to the advancement and achievement of club members.

REGULAR MEETINGS of the OARC, Inc., are held on the second Wednesday of each month (except July and August) in the Champlain Room (2nd floor of the Old Teacher's College) of the RMOOC HQ complex on Lisgar St., Ottawa, at 1915 hours. Further details about each meeting is elsewhere in this publication.

THE OARC EXECUTIVE normally meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 1930 hours. Contact the President to confirm the date of the next meeting.

PACKET RADIO MEETINGS will be held at 7:30 p.m. on the last Thursday of every 2nd month, starting September 1993, at the Museum of Science and Technology. This is an OARC technical meeting open to all who have an interest in packet radio.

DEADLINE FOR COPY is the second Wednesday of each month. Make yourself better known to fellow members and other amateurs, too, by giving us an article, technical or otherwise, relative to our hobby.

MATERIAL PUBLISHED herein does not necessarily represent the official OARC viewpoint. Items may be reprinted by Amateur Radio or other publications provided that proper credit is given to the author and to the OARC, Inc.

JUNIOR MEMBERSHIPS - To encourage young people to join the club and to participate in amateur radio, the club is opening a junior class of membership. Dues will be at a 50% discount but the junior member must pick up his/her copy of the Groundwave (preferably at the meeting).

RADIO AMATEUR CALL BOOKS are available at many local libraries. Ask at the information desk.

SAFETY BELTS AND AN ENGRAVING PENCIL are available for loan to club members. The engraving pencil (to mark valuables for identification in case of loss or theft) and the safety belts with pole straps are available to any members. For the belts, a refundable deposit

consisting of a cheque equal to the replacement value of the belts is required. Contact the President for the engraving pencil; and Paul, VE3ICV, at 820-6643 (West End) or Brian, VE3JKZ, at 523-1535 (East End) for the belts.

THE CAPITAL CITY NET meets every Monday at 2000 hours on the Club Repeater VE2CRA (146.34/.94) to pass traffic and to make announcements of interest to amateurs in the National Capital Region.

PACKET RADIO VOICE NET meets following the Capital City Net on VE2CRA at 2040 hours. This is an informal net to answer questions about packet radio, pass along operating hints and provide information for future packet operators.

THE SWAP NET is a service provided and conducted by Ed Morgan, VE3GX. This feature appears on the Capital City Net, noted in the foregoing paragraph. To list items and make inquiries, call Ed Morgan at 733-1721.

POT-HOLE NET is a SSB/HF net sponsored by the Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club, and conducted every Sunday at 1000 hours on 3.760 Mhz. All amateurs are welcome to check in. The Swap-Net is a regular feature.

POT-LID CW NET is an informal slow-speed CW net sponsored and conducted by Ed, VE3GX, and meeting every Sunday, except during July and August, at 1100 hours on 3.620 Mhz, to promote interest in CW and CW procedures.

REPEATERS

VE2CRA	Voice	146.94/34
		443.300/448.300
VE3OCR	Packet	145.01(sx) Inter city links
VE3OCR	Packet	145.07(sx) Local Area net
		for QSO and Packet BBS.
56 kbps	Packet	220.55/433.55
VE3XDX	Packet	145.11(SX)

For further information, please contact repeater chairman.

OARC WWW Home Page:
<http://www.worldlink.ca/oarc>.

CONTENTS

MINUTES OF THE OARC MEETING
 MAY 8, 1996 3
 mk's WORDS 4
 2 Meter AND 70 cm BANDS
 THREATENED! 4
 AMSAT NEWS SERVICE BULLETIN 15302 7
 THANK YOU FROM JACQUES, VE3TSC 8
 GROUNDWAVE SWAP SHOP 8
 COMING EVENTS OF INTEREST 9
 ASSORTED SPLATTER 9
 HOW THE DECIBEL GOT ITS NAME 9

JUNE MEETING: June 12, 7:30 pm, Keefer Room, at RMOC, 111 Lisgar St, Ottawa. Programme: Elections

MINUTES OF THE OARC MEETING
MAY 8, 1996

The meeting was called to order by the President, Richard VE3UNW at approximately 19:40. Richard welcomed Bill VE3NVG, Ed VE3GX and Gord VE3GEX to the meeting.

George VE3BNO asked if anyone had a copy of a GE progress line P/S manual he could borrow. The manual is needed to repair VE3TEN which has been down for approximately 4 weeks. George also reminded the members and guests that the QCWA convention is being hosted by the Ottawa chapter on October 4 and 5, 1996 and all amateurs are welcomed.

Richard announced that the club will be represented this Field Day by Paul Coverdale VE3ICV. All members were invited to visit the site. One club member expressed his appreciation for the excellent job done by the Groundwave editor and his staff in producing the club's newsletter. Richard announced that the advanced class would be concluding in a few weeks and that

shortly after another basic class would begin. Eight people have already indicated their interest. Registration will be the last Tuesday in May. Course fees will include membership in OARC and RAC. Richard learned that Peter Jago VE3PWJ would not be able help with executive nominations this year and asked for help from any member. Please contact Richard or any executive member.

Bill VE3NVG announced that this year's airshow will not conflict with Field Day. Bill needs approximately 20 volunteers each day to provide communications at the show. Radios will be supplied for use on 9 nets but a H/T would be helpful for a simplex net for the operators. Bill noted that while no money is guaranteed to participating clubs there will be free admission to the show as well as pre and post functions and a hat. Contact Bill at 737-4003.

A ten minute video on the 1995 Ski Marathon was shown. The video covered the highlights of both days, starting with the start where 1500 skiers left in -8 degree weather and ended with 41 skiers finishing in -38 degree weather.

On behalf of the OARC Richard presented Ed Morgan VE3GX with a plaque recognizing his 26 years of devotion to the amateur radio community. For the past twenty six years Ed has conducted the swap net which was featured on the club's Capital City Net as well as the Pot-Hole Net sponsored by the OVMRC. As a testimonial Joe VE2JHT thanked Ed for helping him when he was newly licensed in repairing an old Heathkit transceiver. Joe expressed his appreciation to Ed for all his help and guidance. It was also noted that Ed continues to operate the Pot-Lid CW net which is in its twenty fourth year of operation. The net is an informal slow-speed CW net which meets every Sunday (except July and August) at 1100 hours on 3.620 Mhz.

The second award was given to Paul Campbell VE3PC for his dedication in producing the Groundwave and for his continued service to the club. Paul was unable to be present and the plaque will be given to him at a later date.

The 50/50 draw was won by Rick VE3IHI.

Richard closed the meeting at 22:30 followed by a ragchew and coffee. Mike VE3FFK displayed two of his new toys, an Index Labs QRP transceiver and a GPS receiver.

mk's WORDS...

May 30 /96 - It seemed like such a simple project.. a wire loop.

I started two days before the last (I hope) snow of the season. There were no leaves out, so the wire would find its way up the branches without any problem. So far, so good. Then I got to thinking--and that's where the trouble started. There is no point in bringing the ends of the loop into the house through a window if they can come up to the attic and gain another four meters or so of altitude. So it's up to the attic to see if there is an easy way to get the wires up there. Well no easy way, but it looks like if I cut a doorway >here< I can not only get the wires in, but I can gain access to the flat part of the roof to put up temporary towers without a lot of bother about extension ladders and such.

If I can get up there without the ladder, I can put the ladder up there and get the antennas even higher... Meanwhile, I notice the attic can use some more insulation. More time/money and weekends go by... Then I notice that the "window" at the other end of the attic could use some attention as well. I can see that becoming another access hatch to the antenna ranch. So far, the wires are in

the trees, but a long way from the radio, the credit card people are smiling, and I'm getting along well with the nice people at the lumber store. But it may be field day before I put a dit out on the low bands.

It's a good thing there is lots of entertainment to be had on the little waves too. In June alone, there is the VHF/UHF QSO party, the SMIRK contest (six meter international radio klub, if you need to ask), and a bunny hunt on two meters. Then there is the fleamarket season, and the thing a thons to do. It's a good thing the days are longer this time of year.

73 and don't let the black flies bug ya.. they've waited a long time too.

mk ve3ffk

2 Meter AND 70 cm BANDS THREATENED!

This is no joke!! ARRL has learned that in preparation for the WARC conference in 1997, representatives of the LOW-EARTH-ORBIT (LEO) industry proposed a list of candidate frequency bands for reallocation to, and EXCLUSIVE use of the Mobile Satellite Service. This list includes 144-148 MHZ (the current 2-meter band) and 420-450 MHZ (the current amateur 70 CM band)!

If this effort were to be successful, it would mean the end of amateur operations in the two most heavily utilized and loaded amateur VHF/UHF bands!

I have included the text of Dave Sumner's upcoming editorial for July QST in this bulletin. ARRL, is actively pursuing this issue as this bulletin is being written. Dave's call to action is serious!! We Canadian amateurs could lose these bands as well, if we do not take action now!! It is hoped and expected that RAC will pursue this issue with the utmost determination and vigour!

Follows the Emergency Bulletin #32, and the text of Dave Sumner's July QST editorial:

QST de W1AW, ARRL Bulletin 32, From ARRL Headquarters Newington CT May 30, 1996
To all radio amateurs:

Amateurs Mobilize Against Threat to 2 meters, 70 cm

The American Radio Relay League is asking radio amateurs across the United States to help defeat a threat to the two most heavily used amateur VHF and UHF bands.

An industry working group known as IWG-2A that is preparing draft US proposals for the 1997 World Radiocommunication Conference has before it a list of "candidate bands" for low-earth orbit mobile satellites ("little LEOs") that includes, among a number of others suggested for consideration, the 144 and 420 MHz bands. Little LEOs are intended mainly to offer commercial paging and other low-data-rate messaging services. The list of candidate bands was submitted by little LEO industry representatives at a meeting of IWG-2A on May 7. ARRL Technical Relations Manager Paul Rinaldo, W4RI, was present and objected strongly to the inclusion of these two bands. He was told that objections should be submitted in written comments, and the ARRL did so on May 15. At the same time the ARRL advised the industry participants in IWG-2A along with its chairman, Warren Richards of the Department of State, that if we did not receive assurance that the bands would be dropped from the list of candidate bands we would have no choice but to advise members in July QST that the bands were under threat. No such assurances were forthcoming. Instead, we were told that as long as little LEO allocations requirements remained unsatisfied, everything had to remain on the table.

This response was not acceptable. Accordingly, when July QST went to the printer on Tuesday, May 28, it included

the following editorial. The editorial speaks for itself, but it is worth emphasizing that there is no reason for panic. What we are dealing with is an ill-considered industry effort that is in its early stages, there is no reason to believe there is any government support for any move against these two amateur bands. Our mission is to quash the idea before it goes any further. An outpouring of thoughtful comment by amateurs, explaining why the public interest would not be served by the introduction of commercial services into these bands, will go a long way toward ensuring the desired outcome.

It Seems to Us, July 1996 QST:

Write Now. Get out a pen and paper, or boot up your computer. There's work to be done. Your help is needed to defend two meters and 70 cm. Yes, that's right--the two most popular and crowded amateur VHF/UHF bands. But don't panic, and don't "go ballistic". Here's what's happening, and what you can do about it.

The United States is preparing for the 1997 ITU World Radiocommunication Conference, WRC-97. In the past, the public has been able to participate in the preparations for such conferences by responding to FCC Notices of Inquiry. In March, the FCC announced a streamlining of its International Bureau's preparatory processes for WRCs. Under the new scheme, the NOIs have been eliminated in favor of increased emphasis on WRC Advisory Committees.

For WRC-97, a series of Informal Working Groups (IWGs) of the Advisory Committee has been created to address specific agenda items. The output of each IWG will go directly to a joint FCC-NTIA-Department of State Steering Committee of the Advisory Committee. There, draft proposals as received from the IWGs will be reviewed and forwarded to the FCC for possible release as preliminary U.S. proposals for public comment.

In announcing the streamlined WRC preparatory process, the FCC tried to reassure those who might be concerned about reduced opportunities for public participation: "Interested parties should note that input to the Advisory Committee may be sent at any time directly to the Chair of the WRC-97 Advisory Committee, the Chairs of the Advisory Committee's Informal Working Groups, Cecily C. Holiday, the FCC's federal officer of the WRC-97 Advisory Committee, or to Damon C. Ladson, the alternate federal officer." Hold that thought while we shift gears to the substance of the issue.

One of the WRC-97 agenda items includes consideration of possible additional frequency allocations for the mobile-satellite service. So-called "little LEOs," low-earth orbit satellites below 1 GHz, already have allocations. Their proponents claim these are inadequate and are trying for more. The needs of little LEOs are being addressed in IWG-2A, chaired by Warren Richards of the Department of State. The ARRL technical relations staff participates in IWG-2A to represent Amateur Radio interests. At the May 7 IWG-2A meeting, an industry representative proposed a list of "candidate bands" for little LEOs. The list includes a number of bands that would negatively impact existing services, and does not include others that would be technically more feasible but to which strong objection from incumbents could be expected--the point being that some political, rather than purely technical, judgment already has influenced the list. Incredibly, 144-148 and 420-450 MHz were included on the list. This is the first time in memory that another service has been proposed for the two-meter amateur band. We must make sure it is also the last time.

We do not need to explain to ARRL members the extensive use that is made of these bands by amateurs. The two bands provide the backbone of our local public service communications effort. Voice and data,

mobile and fixed, even television--the list of present amateur uses is a long one, and of future uses is even longer. Both are already used for satellite services and for moonbounce and extended-range terrestrial operations requiring extremely sensitive receivers and high levels of effective radiated power.

Apparently we did need to explain all this to the little LEO industry representatives, so we did just that--both at the meeting and in a follow-up letter on May 15. We also explained that we had to regard the matter as extremely serious. No one with the slightest background in radio communication could possibly believe that a mobile-satellite service could be introduced into either band without disrupting existing and future amateur operations. Therefore, we said, if we did not receive assurance that they would be taken off the list of candidate bands by the deadline for this issue of QST, we would have no choice but to bring the matter to the attention of the entire membership.

The response we received was unsatisfactory. In effect, we were told the little LEO industry would consider our views but that until their spectrum needs are satisfied, all bands must remain under consideration.

So, this is a call to action. We must get across to the industry and government participants in IWG-2A that the 144-148 MHz and 420-450 MHz bands cannot be considered as candidates for mobile-satellite services. We need to drive the point home so forcefully, with so many grassroots responses, that no one is ever tempted to try this again. Which brings us back to that invitation for "interested parties" to send input "at any time". There's no time like the present. Here are the key addresses, including those of the mobile-satellite industry folks who seem to have started the ruckus:

Cecily C. Holiday, International Bureau, FCC, Washington, DC 20554, choliday@fcc.gov, fax 202-418-0748.

Warren G. Richards, Chair, IWG-2A, Department of State, CIP 2529, Washington, DC 20520, richardswg@ms6820wpoa.us-state.gov, fax 202-647-7407.

Tracey Weisler, FCC Rep, IWG-2A, International Bureau, FCC, Washington, DC 20554, tweisler@fcc.gov, fax 202-418-2824.

Mary Kay Williams, Final Analysis, Inc, 7500 Greenway Center, Suite 1240, Greenbelt, MD 20770, fax 301-474-3228.

Do comment. But be civil. Don't abuse people who are simply doing their jobs. We have to get across that casting covetous eyes on amateur bands is counterproductive, and contrary to the public interest. To accomplish this we need a lot of comments, including yours. But remember that the objective is to educate and persuade, not to intimidate. We don't need to. The facts are on our side.

To monitor the FCC's ongoing WRC-97 preparations, visit its WRC-97 home page at: <http://www.fcc.gov/ib/wrc97/>. Write now. Right now.

David Sumner, K1ZZ

The editorial may be reprinted in its entirety with the credit line, "Reprinted with permission from July 1996 QST."

AMSAT NEWS SERVICE BULLETIN 15302
FROM AMSAT HQ, SILVER SPRING, MD,
JUNE 1, 1996, TO ALL RADIO AMATEURS:

In another, development unrelated to the commercial little LEO proposal, it has been learned that NASA (JPL) plans to launch a Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)

on a satellite in a 400 km orbit. A need for frequencies in the 400-470 MHz range has been satiated. The choice of this part of the spectrum is reportedly due to its ability to penetrate foliage and desert. Word has been received that they have chosen to go after the 430-440 MHz band.

The proposed NASA radar will reportedly result in a very high power flux density at the Earth's surface and could cause interference to amateur operations if the radar transmissions were continuous in nature. However, this appears not to be the case based on recent correspondence between ARRL and JPL. JPL claims that the imaging radar proposed will be transmitting only over land with a typical 1 to 5 minutes on cycle followed by a 10 minutes off cycle. These on-off cycles will be programmable and will be active mainly over dry land masses and woody biomasses, and rarely over populated areas.

JPL describes the orbit as an East-West drifting orbit with a 1 day repetition period. The one-satellite NASA/JPL proposed system will be flown not earlier than the year 2001. They claim that due to the short duration of the active transmissions as well as to the onboard antenna directivity (the main beam, pointing sideways, will illuminate for less than 2.5 seconds a given point in the Earth's surface) the probability of causing continuous harmful interference to the Amateur Radio Service will be insignificant.

In another, similar proposal, the Netherlands Agency for Aerospace Programs was reported to have submitted a request for a frequency allocation for an "Earth Exploration Satellite" to active within the 400-470 MHz Band. This was presented and discussed at the Dec. 7-15, 1995 meeting of the Space Frequency Coordination Group. The Netherlands government requests an allocation of at least 3.5 MHz bandwidth in the frequency band 400-470 MHz. The footprint of the

satellite antenna will be +/- 83 km by +/- 83 km (azimuth vs. range). This report assumes a satellite altitude of 750 km, which they calculate would illuminate a given location on Earth for about 13 seconds while the satellite passed over. The report claims the number of times an earth station would experience interference from the SAR would depend on the station's latitude, but would only be about 9 times a year.

The Netherlands SAR would operate in a burst mode having a duty cycle of 33% (0.43 seconds on, 1 second off) with a peak power of 760 Watts and an antenna gain of 28.7 dB. Linear frequency modulation pulse compression (chirp) would be used.

Based on these parameters, the report calculates the peak power flux density as -75 dBW per square meter in 3.5 MHz (-87 dBW average). AMSAT has been asked by the ARRL Washington Office for an assessment of the interference potential to and from the amateur satellite service that might result from both of these proposed satellite radars.

THANK YOU FROM JACQUES, VE3TSC

This is just a short note to thank your club for letting me demonstrate Will VE3XMT's Winkman VHF SWR/RF detector kit. Thirty-nine kits were put together with great success at the building sessions. These kits (audio or visual) can now be purchased for \$50 plus tax and shipping/handling. Also available separately are the schematics, circuit boards and the assembly manual for the Winkman or the schematics for an intermod filter or a mike VOX. Another kit that one can order is a code oscillator. For more details contact Jacques VE3TSC at 748-6597 or see the Web site "www.tenebris.com/~warren".

GROUNDWAVE SWAP SHOP

This space is available free to members to post their "ads". If you'd like to post a sale or want item, you can reach me, Ed, VA3ES, at the club meetings, or you can call it in: Telephone: 738-8924, packet: VA3ES@VE3KYT.#EON.ON.CA.NA.

FOR SALE

1. TRIO/KENWOOD Oscilloscope, Model CO-1303G. Contains built-in two-tone generator, and RF monitor. Very Clean, complete with manual. \$195.
2. Lafayette Receiver, Model KT-340. 550 KHz - 30 MHz. Bandsread on 80/40/20/15/10 meters. Built-in BFO, "Q-multiplier" and noise limiter. Very clean with manual. \$65.
3. Low Pass Filter, 50 ohm, MFJ-704. 1 KW. New, sealed in box. \$30.
4. Eimac Tubes: 3-400Z and 4CX350A, several of each. Unused. each: \$60.
5. Table-top Rack Cabinet, Hammond. 20"W x 13"D x 8"H. Very clean, original Hammond Grey paint. \$35.

Contact Brian Summers, VE3JKZ 613-523-1535, concerning these items.

WANTED

Modulation transformers 500 W - 1000 W
 Modulation reactors (chokes) 30 HY or higher, 500 mA or higher.
 Contact: Ed Sieb, VA3ES, at (613) 738-8924

FOR SALE BY CLOSED AUCTION

The Heathkit HW-8 recently donated to the OARC Advanced Class will be auctioned off at the June meeting of the OARC. This Heathkit HW-8, is a unbuilt kit in very close to pristine condition. Two "spare" integrated circuits chips are included and, as near as we can tell, all original Heath documentation and parts are in the box. It will be auctioned "as-is".

Written bids must be received by June 12th, 1996, 7:30pm and will only be accepted from club members. Bids may be mailed to the club address or handed to the club secretary at the June meeting.

COMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Fessenden Radio Day, Saturday, June 15, 1996

The Quebec Society for Vintage Radio Collectors is having an Antique Radio Show and Swap meet, at the Brome County Historical Museum, Lac Brome, (Knowlton) Quebec. Scheduled events include Vintage Amateur station VE2FRV operating all day, large display of vintage radios, (over 100) from 1920 on, and a free BBQ at noon! Also included is a radio swap meet going all day. There is also scheduled a "Crystal Radio Festival" with a contest for the best crystal radio! For more info, please contact Orn Arnason, at 514-243-6934 or 243-6782.

ASSORTED SPLATTER...

Did you know...

In Japan, all operator certificates are issued for life and station licenses and calls are valid for five years?

Theoretically, there are 1,350,000

Japanese radio amateurs but a more accurate survey only shows about 33.3% of that figure or about 449,550 hams. The number of active amateurs is around 50,000.

There are four classes of license, and 92.2% of all licenses belong to the fourth, "no-code" class. In apparent violation of international radio laws, Fourth Class licensees operate voice on 80, 40, 15 and 10 meters with a maximum output of 10 watts.

from St. Paul RC Groundwave, March 1996

HOW THE DECIBEL GOT ITS NAME

by SAM N5GIZ

In the early days of telephony, the engineers at Bell Laboratories needed a standard unit of measurement for sound. To accomplish this, one engineer stood on one side of the room and held a small bell in one hand which he struck with an equally small hammer. An engineer on the other side of the room recorded the amount of sound thus produced and the pair deemed this to be one "bell".

The Bell, like the Farad, turned out to be too large and cumbersome for their calculations so the engineers divided it into tenths which they called "Decibells". With usage, the hyphen and the final "l" were dropped and we find it today in its present form, the "decibel".

Note: The source for this is my memory of a Bell Telephone class on transmission several years ago. If anyone has done better research and has a different tale, I would like to hear it.

de The Ground Wave, bulletin of the Saint Paul Radio Club Inc. via The Newsletter published by the Nittany Amateur Radio Club, State College, PA

Hamfest Review
by Ed Sieb, VA3ES

The 1996 Hamfest season is in full swing, and I've done my share by attending quite a few since late April. My rule is to try and attend as many "local" 'fests as I can. My criterion for a local 'fest is one which I can get to within four hours drive time. So far I've attended seven including Syracuse NY, which I have to say was superb!

I've noticed some interesting differences between Canadian (or at least local Ontario) hamfests, and ones in the U.S. At Syracuse, I noticed many commercial vendors, including the smaller manufacturers like The Wireman and other small entrepreneurs, as well as the usual commercial dealers. I also noticed several surplus dealers, offering an excellent assortment of high-quality electronics, including hard to find components, high-voltage parts, transmitting components, etc. At one table, I found "NOS" (new, old stock) tank coils, ceramic transmitting caps, RF Chokes, plate caps, and all sorts of ceramic parts. Another vendor sold only flexible, neoprene high-voltage wire and military surplus meter leads and probes. These probes and leads easily cost hundreds of dollars from the original vendor; here they were, brands like E.F. Johnson, ITT-Pomona, and Millen, brand new in their original packages for \$3.- \$5! I also noticed more boat-anchors, or classic rigs like Swan, Drake, Heath and National, though mostly receivers and older transceivers. Big AM transmitters are really getting scarce, and the only one there, a Heath DX-100, went very early - apparently it left the fleamarket by 9 AM!

The largest fleamarket I've attended in Canada was the

"Quebec Hamfest" at Tracy Quebec. Very impressive. This show occupied a complete curling arena, with more vendors overflowing into a large 40' by 80' tent adjacent to the arena, with a passageway between them for easy access to both areas. This show had a nice variety of items, plenty of boat-anchors, lot's of neat parts and components and many commercial vendors. Icom Canada had a display set up as well. I managed to spend my entire budget at one table alone! (You can never have enough high-power transmitter parts!) This show is the largest show in eastern Canada, and I'll definitely be there next year.

You get to notice the same faces on the hamfest circuit. I suppose, like gypsy traders the same vendors make the usual rounds buying and selling stuff. I guess the hamfest vendors constitute a sub-culture within the Ham community. With all the pre-opening swapping and trading going on, you get to wonder how many times the vendors buy back their own junk?

I have an image of the entire contents of basements merely changing addresses. That same boat-anchor chassis moving around from basement to basement for 15 years, slowly losing a part here, a knob there. Eventually it ends up as a bare hunk of steel lying under a flea-market table. Finally, the last purchaser leaves it there for the clean-up crew to toss into the trash.

Happy hamfesting, (or is it hamfestering?). I'll see you 'round the flea-markets

Ed, VA3ES