

First off: We are really in need of a QSO Editor. If you would like to try your hand at it, please get hold of Val VE5ACJ, who will give you the email addresses, and any help as requested. Thank you.

Contributed by Murray Macfarlane VESXO

Practically all my life I have been intrigued with radios. I once had a crystal radio, no battery or power source, but I hooked it up to the overhead telephone wires and could get one or two AM stations. I thought it was amazing!

As a young teenager I remember hearing stories about "hams" who could talk over long distances and I couldn't understand how such a thing could take place. I went into a store, actually a jewelry store, in Carnduff (a small town in southeastern Saskatchewan near our farm) and asked the owner if he had any catalogues with radios that would be capable of picking up distant stations. I didn't even know to refer to them as shortwave radios. Anyway there were some shown in his catalogue but I didn't order one – I just went home and kept on dreaming.

I also approached another man in Carnduff who repaired radios and TVs thinking he might know something about ham radios but he discouraged me saying I probably wouldn't be able to get a license unless I took some classes. That was about the last straw because I didn't even know a ham radio operator let alone where to take classes.

Along the way I did learn that to get a ham license one had to learn the Morse code. I was mesmerized as I used to watch the railway agent in my hometown of Glen Ewen listen to the chatter and translate it into messages.

As time went on, somewhere I got a copy of 'So You Want to Be a Ham' by Robert Hertzberg - W2DJJ, so I learned a little albeit with an American slant. Then somehow, around 1967, I obtained a Canadian Radio Licensing Handbook by Jim Kitchin- VE7KN. In it was a list of Canadian hams and one was listed as being in Oxbow, 18 miles from where I lived. Alas after inquiry, I was informed VE5DX, J. Wood no longer lived there. But in Estevan, sixty miles away, there were supposed to be seven hams but which one would be interested in talking to me about ham radio?

So in Estevan about 1973 around 10:00 in the morning using Kitchin's list I took the dive and phoned a Marv Paulson - VE500. After I spit out my story he invited me over but said to wait a few minutes until he got dressed for the day. I thought to myself - what kind of a guy is not out of bed by ten? (I wasn't aware that he had worked the night shift at SaskPower.)

Well the ball finally started rolling when Marv told me where to get study books, a keyer and whatever else I needed. Also shortly after this, VE5SH - Satya Sharma a school teacher moved to Oxbow, and he helped me along with Roy – VE5HD from Estevan, Robert - VE50E from Steelman, Roland – VE5QM from Bellegarde and others as well.

I never took a class anywhere and found it hard going. When it came to studying the code, my wife Ruth (who later became VE5ABW) joined me in the evenings at the kitchen table when the kids were in bed. It came to her like music whereas for me it was a jumble of dits and dahs. However I persevered reading, listening to cassette tapes and asking my mentors a lot of questions.

Finally in April 1976 I took the exam with Ray Bourne as the examining officer and later became VE5XO. I got my advanced ticket in April of 1978 and my wife delayed her advanced exam long enough to be grandfathered in!

I have never been good at code and know very little about electronics but ham radio has been a great hobby for me. I have met many new and interesting people, made some great friends, and had a lot of amazing contacts near and far.

Learning to computer log in contests

Yup I'm facing a new challenge in amateur radio, "What's that you might ask?" Well I am trying to learn to contest log on the computer. Now, is that difficult you might think, well yes it can be quite challenging for a seventy eight year old. Especially if one is lucky enough to get a pile up going. You see I had my first introduction to contesting back in the seventies when Roland VE5QM, Randy VE5RZ and myself VE5GC took part in field day operations with a group from Man. calling themselves Gopher Creek Amateur Radio club based out of Virden Man. The head honcho was a ham (Arnold VE4IX now sk). All logging was done with paper and pen so consequently that is how I learnt and from then on it was paper and pen, so I had my brain and fingers working as a unit, and I must say it worked quite well especially on cw which I operate almost exclusively.

Then along came computer logging and an introduction to it when we ran a field day operation at Todd's VE5MX place in Weyburn a few years ago. I told Todd, "Nope it is pen and paper for me." but Todd said, "Nope you have to learn to log on the computer", so I struggled along (Sorry Todd about being such a klutz). But after that it was back to pen and paper, until I purchased a logging program a couple of years ago from N3FJP, so here we are today. *So you see it is difficult to get my brain and fingers working in sync again on the keyboard. I did learn to type fairly well, my wife Edel taught typing at school, so she got me going the right way, which is a big asset. I have to admit it is much nicer to have the computer do all the calculating and duping, no more digging through contest logs for hours on end trying to decipher my terrible writing.

Anyway I guess an old dog or ham can learn if we just keep trying. I must say I am getting better. So if you work me in a contest have patience, it might take a while, hi hi. **73's Gray VE5GC.**

Happy Valentine's Day from Saskatoon!

Classes - SARC amateur radio basic class is going well. There are 9 students and 6 instructors that make an enthusiastic group with whom to work.

Meetings - SARC held a business meeting in January. In February we held our gather at Grainfields on 42nd. Amateurs and their Valentine had dessert and coffee. Thank you Doris, VE5DJQ for organizing this event. In March 2016 we are looking forward to a demonstration by Lawrence VA5LD on 2.4 GHz mesh network.

Amateurs meet Saturday mornings for Breakfast at two different locations: 9:00 am at Haywoods in Arlington Mall and 9:30 am at Smitty's at Market Mall. If you are in Saskatoon on a Saturday morning come join us for breakfast.

The 8:00 pm 2M net is going strong. We meet on the 146.640 repeater.

Heard Island DXpedition will be happening March 6 to April 7. The Antipode is 114 kms North of Saskatoon and some Saskatoon amateurs are heading out to set up a portable station to make contact.

Saskatoon Amateurs are preparing to provide communication for 3 community events. MS Walk on Sunday, May 1, 2016, the Saskatchewan Marathon on Sunday, May 29, 2016 and the Pride Parade on Saturday, June 13, 2016 **73, Terry VE5TLC**

Contributed by **Murray VE5MC: THE END OF HAM RADIO?** Written by DOUG BINGLEY (VA3BD) on February 8, 2016.

There's an old saying "if you can't hear them, you can't work 'em." Over the years, hams have built ever better receivers, designed specialized antennas and adapted technology so that even the faintest signal can be heard. By using those techniques, worldwide contacts on the HF bands have become commonplace.

But what if background noise levels become so high that they drown out all signals, even local signals? We are already moving in that direction and I predict that within five years, RFI could become so bad that our HF bands are unusable. Let me explain my position: My wife and I recently moved from a suburban location into the city. At forty feet wide, the lots in our neighborhood aren't gigantic, but they aren't tiny either. Our home is over ninety years old, so we completely renovated it, including re-wiring from top to bottom. After several months in our new home, I decided it was time to get back into ham radio.

I dragged out an old RX and hooked up a short interior antenna. Nothing. Not a peep on all bands. "Stupid boat-anchor." Oh well, I obviously needed to get the tower put up and see how things worked on the beam, A few weeks later the tower was up, the feed-line was in and I expectantly hooked up the receiver. Nothing. "OK, time to hook up the new solid state transceiver." Still nothing but buzzing - "Hmm, the noise is 2 units over S -9." Oh, oh, must be the power lines out front. "

So, I fired up a portable receiver and started down the street. By the time I wandered into the middle of a nearby intersection the buzzing was reduced, and I could clearly hear signals. Next I checked out the power-lines - surprisingly, all clear. Back to my house and the noise was so high, all signals were crushed.

Long story short, our new pot-lights are LED types. All radiate RF. The security lights, also LED, radiate RF. The built in night-lights radiate RF. The source of most of the interference was those LED lamps, all of which need low voltage to operate. To convert from household power to low voltage, each lamp has a built in switching power supply. Each power supply is noisy as hell. Pot lights are extremely popular. I counted a total of 26 in my home, and each one was a little transmitter spewing out RF. The cumulative result was an incredibly high noise-floor. That's just in my house.

I turned all the lights out. Still noise, this time from the digital stove and the digital washing machine. Turned off the main breakers, less buzzing, but still no signals. "Guess my neighbors have new pot-lights as well." In fact, using the portable receiver, I determined that there are only a few homes on the street that aren't radiating RF. The scary part is that the switch to LED's and digital appliances has just begun. In the rush to get cheap, energy efficient products into the hands of consumers, our regulators have been caught flat-footed, if they even care.

At one time the HF bands were a valuable commodity. But technology has moved on and today there are relatively few users of HF frequencies. Those users that do exist, including radio amateurs, just don't have the same sort of clout with the government as say a cellular company. (You can bet that if these devices wiped out cellular service, they'd be off the market in a jiffy). There doesn't appear to be any scrutiny of this flood of new products. From light bulbs to coffee pots to digital cable, household appliances have become digital noisemakers.

So where does that leave us as hams? If our own regulators don't care, surely we can't expect that manufacturers located on the other side of the world are going to be concerned. Why should they worry about the impact on little used radio frequencies? I hate to be a pessimist, but if this trend continues, we may soon reach the point where in many parts of the world, operation on the HF bands will become untenable.

I'm going to replace my LED lamps with incandescent, but that won't resolve the interference from the neighbors. And I sure can't go up and down the street demanding that they turn their lights out. I'm going to try to reduce interference at my side through use of a shielded loop antenna at the end of the yard. That may help out a bit, but I could be fighting a losing battle. I just don't know if I will be able to enjoy the HF part of the hobby in a few years. Is this the end of Ham radio as we know it?

From Regina submitted by VE5SC

VE5SDH Admitted To First Class Operators Club

Congratulations go out to Summer, VE5SDH, who has received membership in the prestigious First Class Operators Club. Only 12 other Canadian hams have received this award.

The First Class CW Operators' Club (FOC) promotes good CW (Morse code) operating, activity, friendship and socializing via its worldwide membership of approximately 500.

Members are active on all HF bands and the character of the club is best expressed in its motto. If you have a genuine love of CW with a minimum operating speed of 25 wpm, and enjoy socializing with others of like interest then FOC could be just right for you. It takes some work to join - it's not simply a matter of filling in a form and sending off a cheque.

First, someone must nominate you - based on their experience of working you on CW on at least two bands within the last year and your sponsor's belief that you will live up to the aims of the club that are listed above. While you may feel free to ask members for information about the club, actually asking to be nominated is considered soliciting and violates club rules.

Once you have been nominated, and you accept, you are added to the Nominations List, which means that all FOC members know you are seeking further sponsorship.

You must then receive sponsorships from four more members within the next six months.

Sponsors must come from at least two continents, with no more than three of the five from any one continent, and at least one must be from the UK. All sponsors must have a CW QSO with you on at least two bands. In recent years, just over half of those nominated have gone on to attain membership. If you are active on the bands, particularly around 25kHz up from the band edge (10120 to 10125, 18080 to 18085 and 24905 to 24910kHz in the WARC bands, 5373 on 60m and 50095 on 6m), you will often find FOC members and, if you can hold a QSO at 25 WPM or so without your CW falling apart, you will find members eager to sponsor you.

Moose Jaw

MJ. Senior's PARC had lovely weather this year, certainly can't complain about the weather and snow. All our members are doing wonderful.

Had our usual luncheon on Feb. 15th and nobody went home hunger

Moose Jaw Amateur Radio Club will be hosting the **Spring Flea-market on April 23rd** at the Western Development Museum, 9-12.00PM See Map on the sarl website .

Please get hold of Brenda for tables ve5trg@sasktel.net 73 Val Acting Area Director

North East Region

There is nothing particularly new from the North-East Region. Winter continues to be merciful and, while the bands aren't great, there are occasionally some interesting DX openings, particularly on 15 metres. Barry (VE5HA) is back from Cuba which indicates that the worst of the winter may well be over. The Melfort, Nipawin and Tisdale repeaters continue to work with their link and Nipawin usually connects with the IRLP system for the evening net **Bj. Madsen - VE5FX**

*****SARL: 2016 Hamfest/Flea-market/AGM July 30, 2016*****

7:30 am -12:30 pm

ELKS HALL – REGINA

4915 1st Ave N, Regina, SK S4R 5R1

OPEN: 7:30-8:00 for set up

8:00-10:15 Flea-market

10:30-12:30 SARL AGM

SARL Members: Free Admission & Tables

Non-Members: Admission: \$5.00 Tables: \$5.00 each or join SARL now

Due to Meeting and Elections, we would like all members to sit in the front rows. All must be signed in. Only Members have participation and voting rights.

Hello from SARL

Congratulations go out to Summer VE5SDH on being inducted into the First Class CW Operators' Club. The proficiency in CW, that Summer has attained in the 2 ½ plus years that she has been an Amateur, is fantastic. The FOC was founded in 1938 and Summer is #2090 on the FOC membership list. She joins a long list of excellent CW operators. Summer joins 12 other Canadian Amateurs on the list and is the only one from Saskatchewan.

Thank you to Val VE5ACJ for again organizing the SARL Hamfest/Flea-market/AGM planned for July 30/15. See details above.

One challenge that SARL is still dealing with is the lack of an editor for the QSO. Some members have been questioning as

to why they are paying their membership if they are not receiving the QSO. We have been tapping shoulders in Moose Jaw, Saskatoon and Regina but no one has come forward to take the editors position. Until the time that an editor takes over, the provincial news will be available on the SARL web site. Thank you to all that have agreed to receive their Provincial News electronically. Some paper copies will continue to be sent out. Please let Val VE5ACJ know if you no longer need the paper copy.

Doris Quiring VE5DJQ-President SARL

Hello everybody,

I apologize for the short report from this corner of the area, not much has happened since the last time I wrote something for the QSO. The few things that come to mind at the moment are, we have had a very nice winter down here and I'm not sorry that I didn't shovel much snow either.

Ray VE5XRA has been busy with Ham classes with six new people. They are getting close to the finish, and will be taking the exam soon. When I spoke to Ray last week he said that they all have a good chance to pass which would mean more hams down here.

Both Ray and Lloyd VE5ITS held an introductory class on the Arduino on Feb.4th at the Swift Current Library. Sixteen people showed up and were treated to some good theory and instructions for the beginner over a two hour period. We all received an Arduino board and a few components to take home to experiment with. We were taught how to do some programming and write some code. These instructions were down loaded from the computer to the Arduino so we could control a series of blinking LEDs. We all had a great time, and another class is being planned before the end of winter.

We have been meeting regularly for coffee and or breakfast every Saturday at 9:30 am. Sometimes we get quite a group together and we have some lively discussions about the projects that we are working on. A few of us bring something for show and tell to display our talents in the hobby. Last week I brought a home brew side operated spring less CW Morse Code Key that I constructed in my workshop.

It is made from solid brass and uses magnetism instead of springs to center the keying arm. I will try to include a picture if the news letter has room. If not maybe I could post some pictures of it on the SARL web page 73 from here, Ken VE5BI Dir. S.W. Vice Pres. SARL



Ken, I will put these pictures on the Website, where they will show up much nicer. Val

