

December 2003

# FEEDBACK



The OFFICIAL Newsletter

of the

# Georgian Bay Amateur Radio Club Inc.

P.O. Box 113, Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 5P1

## GBARC Meetings

are held on the 4th Tuesday of every month except July and August in our CLUBHOUSE, Unit 6 Rockford Plaza, Rockford On. 5km S of Owen Sound. 7:30 p.m.

## Breakfast Anyone?

Any Saturday 9:00 a.m., at the Rockford Restaurant.

## Nets

80 metre net on Sunday at 9:30 a.m. on 3.783 Mhz. Two metre net on Thursday at 9 p.m. on VE3OSR 146.94-Mhz.

## Submissions

are always welcome.

## This Month

CHRISTMAS DINNER

AN OUT OF THIS WORLD EFFORT

YOUTH GROUP

SWAP SHOP

HAM RADIO TRIVIA

MESSAGE FROM THE NEWSLETTER TEAM

GBARC Mail Box

**NEXT MEETING will be on January 27 at the Rockford Restaurant**

### President

Gene VE3IJD



### Vice-President

Bob VE3NX



### Secretary

Tom VA3TS



### Treasurer

Bob VE3LKD



### Newsletter Team

Editor  
Barry VA3WBG  
Steven VE3SEG  
Tom VE3CVL



### Program Director

Jim VE3CJM



# CHRISTMAS DINNER

Approximately 40 club members and friends gathered at the Rockford Restaurant on the evening of November 26 for the georgian bay amature radio clubs annual Christmas Dinner and general all around get together. After our delicious meal, made even better by knowing that we didn't have to worry about doing the dishes afterward, we got down to the more serious business. Door prizes were given out (thanks to all who donated) and a short meeting was held where club members got to vote for the Amateur of the year Award which is given out every year to the club member that best helps out at club functions and demonstrates the goals of Ham Radio to the general public. Congratulations to Stan VA3ZON this years winner. The remainder of the evening was spent with friends sharing laughs and good conversation. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all club members and friends.







# AN OUT OF THIS WORLD EFFORT

The idea was set up a full, working Amateur Radio station at the Exploreum and Science Center in Mobile, Alabama, linked with the center's International Space Station Exhibit. The goal would be to make two-way contacts between the ham station and the ISS possible for the benefit of the multitude of school children who would visit the exhibit and view the Imax movie filmed aboard the ISS.

Sounds like a magnificent idea, with a multitude of opportunities for Amateur Radio publicity and community interaction, doesn't it? Sure, but how does a group of hams come together to build a fully functional station in a public location from scratch, and do it in less than two weeks for the opening of the museum's ISS exhibit? To say that our group, the Mobile Amateur Radio Club, shifted into the scurry mode would be a gross understatement.

The phone call from Bill Watson, education director for the Exploreum and Science Center, came on December 30, 2002 to MARC Vice President Barbara Shumock, AF4EQ, asking what could be done before the four-month exhibit opened January 10. The project would require the installation of a complete Amateur Radio station with HF, 2 meter and satellite capability, including the necessary antennas. An emergency meeting of the club's Board of Trustees was called to determine if the project was doable. The board concluded that it was possible if sufficient support could be garnered from the general membership and the community. Hershel McGraw, K4KKX, was appointed as committee chairman to coordinate the whole affair. A list of needed equipment was compiled, including possible sources. It was immediately obvious that there would have to be a cost share arrangement between the Exploreum and the radio club. The list of necessary purchases was compiled and the negotiations began.

## **The Offers Start Rolling In**

Once the word was out to the club and Bill Watson made his case at a regular club meeting, the response was immediate from both club members and the community. The club was inundated with offers of everything from Rohn tower sections, to cash, to paddles from the Vibroplex Corporation. It was determined that the only necessary major purchases that would be a suitable rotator, software and computer interfaces, appropriate feed line and a suitable antenna. The Yaesu G5500 rotator and M-2 2MMCP antenna were decided upon and promptly ordered. I loaned the use of my Yaesu FT-2400 2 meter transceiver and McGraw loaned the club a Mirage 3060 amplifier. While the rotator and antenna were in transit, numerous volunteers got busy with the installation of the tower, feed line and a Gap Eagle DX vertical antenna loaned by Troy Sellew, KG4TTP. The Exploreum loaned our group a computer, complete with high-speed cable Internet access, for control of the rotator and for use with EchoLink when the space station was below the horizon. Danny Carpenter, N4UXY, our local satellite communications guru, set up the EchoStar dish loaned by William Brown, KF4DIB, and the remote satellite antenna for reception of the NASA satellite downlink. It was fed it into a TV receiver loaned by McGraw.

Virtually every piece of equipment, with the exception of the rotator, circular polarized antenna and its computer interface, was loaned or donated by the local amateur community or the Exploreum. ARRL literature and handouts, aimed primarily at youthful visitors, were acquired from the League and made available to visitors. Carpenter was the prime mover for the installation of the satellite equipment, and accomplished the setup and calibration of the antenna and tracking software. We all increased our knowledge of satellite communications, thanks to Danny. In an effort to more widely publicize the station, articles were posted on *QRZ.com*, the ISS Fan Club Web site and the ARISS site.

The next major problem to be solved was staffing the station every day, including weekends, for the four-month period of the exhibit. It was essential that we have two operators on duty every morning to coincide with most of the school field trips. McGraw cobbled together a schedule for the first two weeks, and volunteers soon filled nearly all the gaps in the morning schedule and most of those in the afternoon as well. Many of those who wanted to volunteer could not due to work, but volunteered for the weekends. A number of club members and hams from other areas voiced an interest in helping, but could not commit to a regular schedule, resulting in a list of alternates.

### **Getting on the Air**

Although we were provisionally operational earlier, the station did not officially go on the air until January 20, 2003. The officials at the Exploreum thought efforts especially noteworthy because most of the equipment was loaned or donated and all the labor was voluntary. It is nearly impossible to calculate the number of volunteer-hours that went into the effort of setting up the station, but by the time the ISS Exhibit closed, the club had expended over 1200 volunteer-hours manning the station. The Exploreum estimates that approximately 80,000 people visited the exhibit. We had as many as 400 school age children in the building at once, with 800 or more in the course of a day.

We had third party traffic nearly every day, especially on EchoLink. Several hams around the country made it a point to be available to talk to the children visiting the exhibit. We established a rather loose schedule on 2 meters with Judy Doucette, KE4PMV, a special education teacher at Ferry Pass Elementary School in Pensacola, Florida. It was a great way to expose children to Amateur Radio and had the added benefit of adding a bright spot to the day of children with special needs at Ferry Pass Elementary.

### **Emergency Communications, In Real Time**

On Monday, January 27, visitors were provided the opportunity to monitor a two-way conversation between the International Space Station and the shuttle *Columbia* via the satellite downlink. They were able to see, in real time, the astronauts aboard *Columbia* and hear the audio from the International Space Station. Many will remember the event because that was less than a week before the accident that took the lives of all aboard *Columbia*.

When *Columbia* began its ill-fated re-entry, visitors at the Exploreum were watching via the Exploreum's Internet link inside the exhibit, as well as the direct satellite link at the club station. Later that same morning, the local NBC and CBS affiliate stations interviewed McGraw and ran portions of the interview that same day. Early in the day HF frequencies were monitored and visitors could listen to hams in Texas discussing the tragedy. A few contacts were made via EchoLink, but after 10 AM Texas stations were not accepting any incoming calls due to the emergency. Very shortly after that, Texas hams could be heard as they were being mobilized to help in the search for debris. This activity gave visitors, who were unfamiliar with ham radio, an opportunity to monitor emergency and disaster communications first-hand.

*The Mobile Register* newspaper interviewed Charlie McClary, AG4PK, that afternoon and printed excerpts from that interview in the Sunday paper. Tuesday morning, February 4, Dexter Isham, KF4NEM, and McGraw also participated in three different interviews by local television stations. The interviews were aired several times that day. This amount of exposure for Amateur Radio was unexpected, considering the circumstances.

### **A Visit from Colonel Voss**

March 14 and 15 were banner days for the ISS exhibit, as Colonel Jim Voss, NASA Astronaut and Deputy for Flight Operations for the Space Station Mission, visited the Exploreum. Voss is a featured astronaut in the ISS movie that showed at the Imax Theater. He is a veteran of five shuttle flights, four space walks and 163 days aboard the International Space Station. Voss conducted a press conference and answered questions posed by a

horde of school children and several equally curious hams! He gave us an insight into Amateur Radio from the perspective of the astronauts aboard the shuttles and space station. Voss told several anecdotal stories of the excitement generated in various communities by scheduled contacts via Amateur Radio between astronauts and their families. The biggest problem they encountered was QRM when within range of US stations--sound familiar?

## HAM RADIO TRIVIA

### 1. HAAT stands for?

A large piece of headgear
Henry Association Authorized Tower
Huge Antenna Apparatus Termination
Height Above Average Terrain

### 2. The DeForest Audion was?

A loudspeaker
A triode vacuum tube
A piece of jewelry
An amplifier

### 3. What does/did the term 'dip and load' refer to?

Technique used in tuning manually tuned TX for proper operation
Adjusting your antenna matching for a low SWR
Reducing the TX RF output while tuning the external RF amp
None of the above

### Answers for the October edition of Ham Radio trivia

1. An electron coupled oscillator
2. A fictional torture device for bad hams
3. "Licensed Since Pearl Harbor"

Answers for these questions will appear in the January edition of the Feedback

---

---

# **MESSAGE FROM THE NEWSLETTER** **TEAM**

---

Have you made an interesting contact or read a really interesting article that you think others would like? well then what better way of doing that then in the GBARC newsletter. The GBARC newsletter is always looking for interesting stories so if you have one done be a chicken be a ham and send it to Steven VE3SEG and Barry VA3WBG at [ve3seg@rogers.com](mailto:ve3seg@rogers.com)

---

## **From The Mailbox**

---

# **ZEROBEAT**

**THE BRUCE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB NEWSLETTER**

**IS NOW POSTED 73 DE JIM COVERLEY VE3OVV**

**<http://www.brucearc.on.ca>**

When in Barrie stop in at the **Barrie Amateur Radio Club**  
**Meeting**

**Georgian college, Rowntree Theatre**

**Date: TBA Time: 7:30 PM**

**73 de ken [ve3kpp](mailto:ve3kpp)**