February 2005

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

A Kid's Perspective of Radio

Ham Radio Trivia

NEXT MEETING will be on March 22 2005 at the Rockford Restaurant

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A Kid's Perspective of Radio

When I was a little kid, about 3 years old, an event occurred one day that would chart a course for me that would influence a major path in my life. You see my 7 year older brother and his fiends had discovered that a Ham radio operator lived just down the street in the small town where we lived in Michigan. My brother and his friends had been invited to visit this guy's radio station but, my brother had to baby-sit me, and that meant that he could not go. I don't really remember the details of the discussion that followed but, an amazing thing happened; my brother took my hand and said, "come on".

Off we went down the street. I had never gone in this direction before because it entailed crossing another street! In any event, before we had gone too much farther than I had ever walked before; we came upon a wondrous sight! In the back yard of this house was a tall cone shaped building. It was wide at its base and narrower as it reached its top, and it had glass windows all the way around the top. I had never seen anything like this before! It also had one other interesting feature, strung all over this tall building and going down to trees or other buildings, were long runs of wires. Wires pretty much circled and surrounded this fantastic looking building!

I remember that there was some delay, as my brothers friends disappeared into the building. In a few minutes my brother and I entered a door at the bottom of the building and started up some spiral stairs. When we got to the top of the building it was filled with radios. They were all around the room everywhere!

Much discussion went on with the man that owned this building, and I don't remember much of what he said. My brother later explained to me though that the man had told him somewhat of how the different radios worked, and showed how different radios would allow him to talk to further distant locations. I was hooked! This was just too fantastic that such things could be done!

I knew that my parents had just recently gotten their first Television set, and a man had come to deliver it, and installed an antenna on the roof of our house. I used to look up at that antenna and wonder why it differed from all the wires at the Ham radio mans house. I used to ride around in my Mom's Oldsmobile and stare at any unusual antennas that I saw on buildings or out in the middle of fields.

Pretty soon after this my parents moved to California where I learned that my Dad would be working for the "Aerospace Industry". I found out pretty soon that he was working on missiles, and a project called Mercury. He would bring me bits and pieces of honeycomb aluminum, and wires and switches, and lamps that were like those built into this "capsule".

When my folks bought a home in Anaheim I met a new friend down the block. His dad worked for a company that built oscilloscopes, and other nifty instruments. My new friend Jim had military surplus radios that his dad had set up for him, and we listened to all sorts of interesting things. Pretty soon I bugged my parents to start getting me radios but, for quite a while, I never had anything as cool as Jim's radios!

I did get a "Caravelle" AM Broadcast band transmitter. With the telescopic whip antenna on this radio it would send a signal just about anywhere within our yard, and almost to the edge of the next door neighbor's property. I then got a Philmore "Crystal Set". This radio receiver was built in a shallow Bakelite box. You could turn the box upside down, and see how the radio was wired. It had a large coil that was wired to the Gallenium crystal, and this big coil, and the Fahnstock clips for the headphones.

I pretty soon learned that when this coil was tapped such that most of its windings were being used, I could hear KFI on 640 Kilocycles. I fact, I could hear KFI almost no matter where the coil was tapped! I also learned that when only a small amount of the coil was in use I could hear stations that said they were at 1500 or 1600 Kilocycles.

Now I knew that these stations used tall metal towers as their antennas. In fact my Dad had taken me and my brother to where KFI's tower was in Buena Park. It was huge, and the tallest thing I had ever seen! My dad said that it was about 800 feet tall, and he said it was called "a half-wavelength radiator."

We had some Eucalyptus trees in our back yard which were about 50 feet tall. Some of the older boys in the neighborhood would climb these, and I got an idea. I took a spool of magnet wire and got some help from one of the braver boys I knew. We climbed one of the trees in my back yard, and strung a length of this wire down to my bedroom. It worked great as an antenna, and I could hear stations that I had never heard before!

I played around with this for some time, and then got the idea of hooking up my Carovelle transmitter to this wire. With some further experimentation, I found out that if I hooked one end of a coil at the bottom of my wire, and the other end of the coil to my Caravelle, I could transmit a signal nearly two blocks away! This coil had about 200 windings.

Years went by and I got a few other receivers. I read many books about radio and electronics, and had several electronics magazine subscriptions. By the time I was ten I had two shortwave receivers and a couple 'monitor receivers' that would tune as high as 172 MegaHertz. In fact the name MegaHertz had just been changed from Megacycle in honor of Heinrich Hertz! By this time I knew that I wanted to become a Ham radio operator, and have a real station!

I had been riding my bicycle all around Anaheim to just about every service or company that used radios. The Taxi cabs had antennas on them that were about 1 and a half feet long, and I knew that they were at 150 MHz. The Santa Fe railroad trains also had antennas about the same size as the Taxi's. Most of the utility services in Anaheim had whip antennas on their trucks that were about 5 or 6 feet long, as did the police cars. I talked to as many people that I could at the police station, and the Yellow Cab taxi service, as well as the railroad station, and the city utilities. They would usually take me out to a police car, or lift me up into a locomotive so that we could read the license details on the radio. I learned quite a bit but, I wanted to know more!

For about 3 more years I learned only by fits and starts. I rode my bike to the homes of radio Ham's that I could identify from their Tri-band Yagi antennas. Most of them said "get lost kid" but, a few would show me their station, and gave me some more books. I read the, "Amateur Radio Handbook," "The License Manual," and "How to Become an Amateur Radio Operator." I showed these books to a friend of mine that was my best friend in Junior High School. He told me of a store he knew of on Euclid Avenue called Henry Radio. He said the whole store was just for Ham radio stuff! The next day after school we rode our bikes there.

We met the guys that worked at the store. I still remember Walt, and Grover, and Bill, and Don. Walt and Don were pretty grumpy but, the other guys were really nice! Grover would often hang around George and I as we tried out the many receivers that were set up on display. Grover would answer questions, and show us different things in the store.

One day a guy came in that settled an argument that George and I were having about the way a particular receiver worked. He showed us why the radio had a 'band-spread' control, and then showed us radios that did not have this feature, which he described as "more stable." We saw Wil in the store every few days. After our first visit, we were there pretty much every day!

We told Wil we wanted to get our Novice licenses, had learned Morse code, and thought that we were pretty well able to pass the exam. I was nervous about going all the way to Los Angeles on Spring Street to take the

test. Wil told us that we could take the Novice test in Anaheim, and we would just mail it to the main Federal Communications Commission office in Virginia.

Well you probably can guess the rest. We took the test, and after weeks and weeks of waiting, my new license WN6BFH arrived in the mail! I was so excited that I hooped and hollered after I had opened the envelope, and showed my new license to my Mom! I was set! My Heathkit HR10 receiver, and my 25 Watt homebrew transmitter were ready to go. I had wire dipoles up in the Pine trees of our yard for 80 and 40 Meters, and I couldn't imagine ever wanting or needing anything more!

Well, that was about four decades ago, 50,000 bucks, and 16 bands now! It's been a great hobby so far; I wonder what wavelength bands I will get on next? Only about 10 to go!

HAM RADIO TRIVIA

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1. What is the 6-meter DX calling frequency?

50.125-MHz

50.100-MHz

50.200-MHz

50.110-MHz

2. In what year did the U.S. government begin licensing hams.

1912

1910

1915

1905

3. What does QRO mean?

Decrease Power

Increase Power

Send Slower

Send Faster

Answers for the November edition of Ham Radio trivia

1. Device that compensates for voltage drop due to current flow.

2. FT-101

3. 1837

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