



Amateur radio operator, Rick Gibson built his own radio equipment. He and Bill Hardie are holding amateur radio operator classes at W. E. Thompson Public School on

Tuesday nights. Anyone interested should contact either men. (News Photo)

# Radios gaining popularity

BY BEV CLARK

What do King Hussein of Jordan, Barry Goldwater of Arizona, priests in the Vatican, Rick Gibson of Lunenburg and Bill and Tess Hardie, of Tiverton have in common? They all have amateur radio licenses.

Amateur radio operators or ham radio operators as they are also known, can speak to other amateurs all over the world.

"We're different than General Radio Service operators (GRS or CB) in that we have to work for our license before we can operate our radios. An exam is written through the department of communications," Mr. Hardie said.

"It can take from three to six months to earn the first amateur radio license which only permits us to use morse code as our mode of communications. After one year, we can take the advanced license examination which will permit us to use any

handicapped people. There is a woman in Caledon whose call number is VE3KAY who is blind and deaf. She uses morse code and can feel the vibrations from her receiver. She is Canada's only blind and deaf amateur radio operator," Mrs. Hardie said.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Hardie and Mr. Gibson agree that the hobby is expensive in the beginning.

"You won't get a transmitter and receiver any cheaper than \$500, but the gear can last you for years with reasonable maintenance," Mr. Hardie said.

"When you consider the cost of other hobbies, such as skiing or boating, the cost isn't that bad," Mrs. Hardie said.

Mr. Gibson built all his own equipment except a signal generator from Heath kits and from scratch.

"This is Victor Echo 3 Alpha Sierra Hotel, T C Q 75 metres," Mr. Gibson said into his transmitter.

He explained what he had

Ontario. VE2 is Quebec, VE4 is Manitoba and so on. VO is Newfoundland and Labrador and VE8 is the North West Territories. C Q means that I'll talk to anyone who hears my transmission and I'm on the 75 metre band," he said.

Floyd, VE1KL from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia heard the call and began speaking to Mr. Gibson via his radio.

"Your signal isn't very strong. How many radials do you have under your antenna," Floyd asked.

The two men began comparing their equipment with Floyd giving Mr. Gibson some advice about his equipment.

After the two operators had finished their conversation and signed off, Mr. Gibson found the the "nut net."

"They're a little group of amateurs in Nova Scotia who keep on meeting and talk to each other every night," Mrs. Hardie explained.

Mr. Gibson has spoken to other operators on every

continent in the world.

"Last month I reached someone in Japan. Asia was the last continent I had to reach," he said.

There are nine countries that the amateurs radio operators in Canada are not allowed to communicate with. They are Iraq, Cambodia, the Libyan Arab Republic, Pakistan, Somali Republic, Turkey, North and South Viet Nam and Yemen.

"It's not Canada that won't let us speak to them, it's those countries' governments that don't want their amateurs speaking to us. We don't speak to them because we fear what could happen to the other party if their country's government caught them talking to us," Mrs. Hardie said.

If anyone is interested in learning more about amateur radio and are interested in working for their license, they can contact Rick Gibson at 396-4692 or Bill Hardie at 368-7822.

will permit us to use any mode of communication," he added.

Mr. Hardie said that the GRS operators just have to fill out a form and buy a license to operate their radios.

Amateur radios may operate at 1000 watts where GRS radios are limited to five watts.

Modes of communication for the amateur radio operators are morse code, radio teletype and slow scan and fast scan television transmissions, and voice.

"The amateurs have also built seven satellites that have been put into orbit by NASA. The last two satellites dubbed OSCAR, Orbit Satellite Carrying Amateur Radio, have been used to retransmit radio messages. The principle is the same as television shows being transmitted via satellite," Mr. Gibson explained.

Mr. Gibson and Mr. Hardie started classes for people interested in getting their amateur radio operator's license last Tuesday.

"There are not enough active amateurs in the area to have a club, so we thought we'd start these classes and see what happens," Mr. Gibson Said.

"The hobby is great for

his transmitter.

He explained what he had said.

"VE3ASH is my call number. VE means Canada, the number three means