THE OVMRC RAMBLER

Volume 41, Number 5, January, 1997

Guatemala Destroys 70 cm Ham Band

From RAC "What's New ?"

Guatemalan amateur radio operators have lost out to commercial interests for the use of the 70 cm band in Guatemala and the cost could be interference to ham radio satellite operation world wide. This is because Guatemala now intends to put commercial operations across the band; commercial signals that will probably include the 70 cm satellite subband.

On Monday, November 18th, 1996, the Diario de Centro America published the new law regulating all telecommunications in Guatemala. Part of the law removes ham radio access from all frequencies above 146 MHz except for tiny slivers in the giga hertz region.

The new law was created by a Commission from the state owned telecommunications company Guatel, which consulted the Radio Club of Guatemala about the project. The Commission was quite astonished to learn that ham operators operate some 20 satellites for global communications. Even more so when Guatemalan hams supplied a list of amateur satellites with operating frequencies and modes. The existence of the Amateur Satellite Service was also brought to the attention of the CEO of Guatel. Also told was the Chairman of the Committee of Congress in charge of the new Guatemalan telecommunications law. He was even presented IARU and ITU documentation.

But even with all of this documentation, the decision was made to run the hams off and turn the spectrum over to money making operations. As a result, the 70 cm band in Guatemala which is comprised of the frequencies between 430 to 440 MHz has now been declared available for commercial use only.

It is not only Guatemala hams that will face problems because of the change. There is likely to be heavy interference to Amateur Satellite Service operations in Region 2 when the transponders on various ham satellites pick up commercial signals and rebroadcasts them on other bands. Even for low orbiting satellites this will affect an area from southern Canada, all of the U.S.A., Mexico, Central and South America down to Chile and Argentina. Taking into account the future operations of the Phase 3D ham satellite, the situation may even get a lot worse.

Needless to point out, contingent upon the disruptive influence the Guatemala move has on the 70 cm band, hams around the world could see the erosion of our hobby with the total loss of the 70 cm spectrum.

It is experiences such as what has happened in Guatemala which responds to those in our ham community who have not as yet joined RAC. If ever we required a strong, united voice to lobby for our interests, the time is now ! How about you - are you a member of RAC ? If not, we urge you to join today !

A Happy, Healthy and Prosperous

New Year, 1997

The Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club

RAMBLER

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Joining or Renewing RAC Membership

When joining or renewing your membership in RAC, remember to quote "OTT-101" on your application. This will reimburse the OVMRC $3 of your RAC membership dues which will be passed back to you in the form of a credit on your next year's OVMRC dues.

OVMRC CODE PHONE - 737-0197
SEE THE OVMRC WEB PAGE:
http:// www.worldlink.ca/ovmrc

Mark Your Calendar !

Next general meeting:

Thursday, January 16th at 1930 hours in the main auditorium of the Museum of Science and Technology. It's the inauguration of the new year 1997. A full business agenda will be discussed. Be informed, be a part of the action, be at the January 16th regular Club meeting.

Deadline for next Rambler:

Thursday, January 24th, 1997.

OVMRC's Repeater:
VE3TWO , 147.300MHz (+)
444.200MHz (+)

Affiliated Clubs

The OVMRC exchanges newsletters with the following organizations:

Algoma ARC, Sault Ste Marie, ON
Augusta Amateur Radio Assoc.Augusta,ME
Border City Radio Club, Windsor, ON
Chatham-Kent ARC Inc. Chatham, ON
Calgary Amateur Radio Assoc. Calgary AB
Comox Valley ARC, Comox, B.C.
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Surey ARC, Surrey, B.C.
Saskatoon ARC, Saskatoon, SK
Thousand Island ARC, Brockville, ON
West Island ARC, Dorval, PQ
Winnipeg ARC, Winnipeg, MAN

Sponsors

The OVMRC provides newsletters to the following organizations for their past support of our activities:

Bytown Marine, Ottawa, ON
Kenwood Electronics Canada Inc. Mississauga, ON
Corel Corporation, Ottawa, ON
WorldLink Internet Services Inc. Ottawa, ON

The OVMRC gratefully acknowledge the support of the Corel Corporation in producing the Rambler.

Ramblings

Wise words from our President,

Dan Reardon, VE3GUU

Our Christmas and Variety Night was very entertaining and I hope that everyone who attended enjoyed themselves. I want to thank everyone who contributed some non-perishable goods for the Union Mission. The Mission's Director thanked us for our thoughtfulness and greatly appreciated our help. I would recommend the Club consider helping the Union Mission every Christmas.
Again, Ken Barry organized a very good and entertaining program for our Christmas/Variety Night. On behalf of the Club, Ken, many thanks for a job well done !
I would also like to thank all those who brought in some goodies for the social hour. And specifically, thank you Ann Asmus for your tireless efforts in preparing the social hour food and beverages. Ann does this job for all of our meeting and does it exceptionally well. Ann, on behalf of the Club, thank you very much.
And thank you to the quiet man in the audio booth, Jake Guertin, who ensures we can all hear what is going on at the dias or on stage.
And finally, thank you to all those who, in their own way, contribute to the organization, or meaning of our monthly meetings and special events. To repeat what I have said on several occasions, this is your Club and you will only get out of it what your are prepared to put into it.
The year 1996 has come and gone and we start a new slate for 1997. I want to extend to each of you my best wishes for health and happiness in 1997.
I look forward to seeing you at our January meeting.

Engine Driven DC Generators

A local source of used military field generators has emerged. The units are rated at 1.5 Kw. i.e. about 50 amps. Although the output is nominally 28 volts dc, it can be reportedly varied from about 10 to 32 volts by means of the on-board voltage regulator. Thus, the units could be used as a 13.8 dc power source. The rope-start engines are both 2 cycle and 4 cycle types. The 4 cycle engines are Chrysler manufacture and the 2 cycle are manufactured by a Swedish producer. The units, fitted with mufflers and gas tanks, are enclosed in open "tumble" frames. They can be easily carried by 2 men. The suggested price is $100 each in running condition. Anyone interested in acquiring a unit is invited to contact Ernie Jury, VE3EJJ, telephone (613) 728-3666.

Worked All NCR Award!

Written by Bob Shaw, VE3SUY

Well, here I go again with another idea. This one is to encourage our local amateurs to get interested and hone their contesting skills. In particular, I would like to set-up an event that would encourage our graduating licensing class to "get going". The Welcome Mat Net successfully performs this role, but can we ever have too much?

I am proposing a contest based on one that was held a few years ago in Palm Beach, Florida with great success. This event was written up on QST for March, 1994, Pg. 60, and December, 1983, Pg. 85. The basic idea is that each participant attempts to make as many contacts with greater NCR amateurs (not necessarily OVMRC club members, although we could have a multiplier for that!), and that there would be multipliers available for different areas, different bands, and different modes. No repeaters would be allowed.

Contacts would be made on very specific frequencies ONLY, so as to create "pileups", giving some excitement to the contest, and giving realistic experience to operators for other contests. I am proposing the following bands:

2 meters
One or two simplex frequencies for fm.
One or two simplex frequencies for CW.

70 cm.
One simplex frequency for fm.
One or two simplex frequencies for CW.

6 meters
One or two simplex frequencies for fm.
One or two simplex frequencies for CW

10 meters
One or two simplex frequencies for fm.
One or two simplex frequencies for CW.
One or two simplex frequencies for SSB.

I would propose a point be awarded for each fm contact, and two points awarded for each CW or SSB contact. Within each category, I would propose multipliers for each "region" (as yet to be defined - perhaps a finer "Maidenhead grid square" approach, or electoral wards etc.) within the greater NCR area. I would propose a multiplier as well for each of the above 9 categories, and a multiplier for using home made antenna, mobile installation operated from one stationary location, and operated by an amateur licensed less than two years. Of course all of these ideas are open to discussion and change!

This contest would likely run for a period from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. on a Sunday. I would like to see a contest in February to iron the "bugs" out, and again in April or May, specifically when the licensing class would be getting their licenses. This would also be a great buildup to the annual Field Day.

An attractive "Certificate of Participation" would be designed and distributed to everyone entering their log, and special notations would be made for the winners in each catagory.

Let me know your thoughts, and especially if you have any interest in helping organize and run this event, and/or enter this proposed event. As always, your comments and ideas can help shape this to be a great annual or semi-annual event for the area amateurs!

I can be reached by telephone at 737-9443 or e-mail at : lycott@fox.nstn.ca.

And The Winner Is...

The winner of the coveted OARC's Joe Norton Award was recently announced as being Evelyn Brien, VE3ECW. Evelyn has been licenced for under two years which qualified her to enter the competition which has as its prize a $500 cash award and a plaque.

We understand that there were a number of excellent entries in the competition which made judging difficult and from which Evelyn was declared the winner ! Congratulations Evelyn.

The Care and Feeding of Your Pet Ham

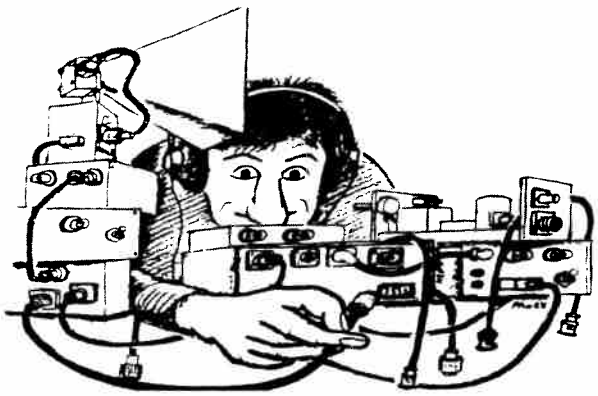
Reprinted from Calgary's Key Klix, Sept/96

The pet ham is one of the most intelligent of pets. Often seeming almost human. But he can also be one of the most difficult to keep. Only a person with a great deal of patience and understanding should attempt to keep a pet ham.

The following is a short guide to some of the most important things that you should know about caring for your pet ham.

1. Living Area:

Your pet ham should have a private area of his own, an entire room if possible, where he will not be disturbed. He will spend many happy hours alone there with his collection of treasures (boxes, wires, bits of metal, glass, paper, plastic, etc. that he will bring home regularly). He should be encouraged to confine his activities to this nest room in order to protect the rest of the house from his natural tendencies towards noise, clutter and making holes in the walls.



2. Expenses :

Raising your pet ham can turn into an expensive hobby but, unlike most pets, the pet ham can be trained to work outside the home for short periods and so bring in enough money to cover part or all of his expenses.

3. Feeding :

The well behaved pet ham will be able to eat with the family on occasion. But he usually feels more comfortable and secure if he can take many of his meals in the privacy of his nest room. It will be your responsibility to see that your pet ham is kept well supplied with food and drink during the long periods of time that he will spend alone in the nest room.

4. Housekeeping :

With some patience and persistence, pet hams can usually be trained to use the family bathroom facilities.

5. Obedience Training :

Most pet hams can be trained to respond to a few simple commands. The easiest for him being "sit" and "speak". Once your pet ham has learned these commands, he will sometimes practice them on his own for hours at a time.

6. Health Care :

The pet ham is especially subject to minor irritations of the lower back and sore throat from too much sitting and speaking. The special "CW" breed tends to have a tired wrist rather than a sore throat, and the "RTTY" versions may suffer from tired and hurting eyes depending on his age and monitor.

7 . Travelling :

Your pet ham will gladly travel with you in the family car if he is allowed to bring some of his collection from his nest room. His favourite trips will be to places where he can associate with other pet hams from other families.

8 . Breeding:

If you plan to breed your pet ham, you should do so as early as possible after you get him. As the pet ham matures he becomes more and more reluctant to engage in any activities not connected with his nest room collection.

Work The RS-12 Satellite On HF

Written by Omri Serlin, AA6TA

The three Russian RS-series hamsats now in orbit all have downlinks on 10 metres. RS-12 went up in February, 1991. It orbits once every 105 minutes, 600 miles up, in an orbit inclined 83 degrees. That means that, on good passes, RS-12 stays above the horizon as long as seventeen minutes.

RS-12 is the only hamsat currently operating in "Mode K" - uplink on 15 metres and downlink on 10 metres. So you can work it using any HF rig capable of cross-band split operation, or with a separate transmitter and receiver. Even if you use a transceiver cross-band, you'll find an extra receiver on 29 MHz useful. Of course, you will need antennas for both 15 and 10 metres. A multiband vertical or beam works fine. And 100 watts is plenty of power.

RS-12 has a CW telemetry beacon on 29.408 MHz. Make sure you can hear the beacon clearly before you transmit on the uplink. You can monitor the beacon frequency continuously whenever you are in your hamshack. That way, you won't need a tracking program to tell you when RS-12 is overhead. But tracking data is available at http://www.acs.ncsu.edu/script/hamradio/sattrack on the World Wide Web - on any ham satellite.

As with the other satellites with HF downlinks (RS-10 and RS-15), you can sometimes hear RS-12 when it is below the horizon - via reflections from the ionosphere and earth ("skip").

An excellent way to start is by working the CW robot aboard RS-12; it transmits on 29.454 MHz and receives on 21.129 MHz. The robot resembles the AEA Morse Machine; it periodically sends "CQ de RS12 QSU 21129 kHz," then "listens" for calls of the form "RS12 de yourcall AR." If it recognizes your call, it sends, "yourcall de RS12," followed by a message containing the QSO number it assigns your contact - repeated twice. If your fist or signal is poor, or if you send too slowly, it says, 'RPT" or "QRZ?" The robot matches your speed over a reasonable range. If you want a QSL card, copy the QSO number, orbit number, Zulu time, and date.

Once you have worked the CW robot, you are ready for your first true satellite contact, working another ham via the satellite's transponder. The transponder takes any CW or SSB signal it receives in the uplink passband, 21.210 - to - 21.250 MHz, and retransmits it on the downlink, 29.410 - to - 29.450 MHz. The transponder is non-inverting. If you transmit on, say, 21.220 MHz - 10 kHz above the bottom of the uplink range - it retransmits your signal at 29.420 MHz - 10 kHz above the bottom of the downlink range.

On HF, Doppler-effect shifts frequencies only a few hundred Hertz, so the frequency relationship stated above stays quite accurate.

The extra receiver I recommend allows you to listen to your own signal on the downkink. It's an important advantage to know when you're getting through.

The non-inverting transponder causes USB uplink signals to produce USB downlink signals. By Convention, all satellite SSB communications should use USB on the downlink. So on an inverting transponder, you transmit LSB. Also by convention, the lower part of the downlink passband is reserved for CW, the upper part for SSB.

Once you find your signal on the downlink, you can look for a CQ, or call CQ yourself. Be sure to indicate, in every call, that you want contacts via RS-12; call "CQ CQ CQ RS de yourcall," on CW, for example. This alerts listeners to the fact that you are working via a satellite, and don't want direct calls on your transmit frequency. Since the range above 29 MHz is off the beaten path, the likelihood of someone thinking you are calling for a direct contact is low, but you'll occasionally get a direct call anyway. Of course, when the other guy hears you direct, it doesn't count as a satellite QSO.

Once you establish contact via satellite, give all the vital information - your call, the other station's RST, your name and QTH or grid square - on the first over. Get the same info immediately. Satellites are not for ragchewing

Earn A Wise Owler Certificate

A reminder to all that starting Friday evening, January 17th your check-in on the Wise Owl Net will be credited towards a Wise Owl Certificate.

There are two types of certificates which will be awarded. To earn a Class "A" certificate you must check into the net on a minimum of ten separate dates. For those amatreurs who cannot meet the requirements for a Class "A" certificate, they may qualify for the second type of certificate, a Class "B" certificate. Theses latter certificates may be earned by checking into the net on a minimum of seven separate dates.

The period during which you may qualify for these very attractive certificates is the eleven weeks from January 17th to March 28th.

The Wise Owl Net is on the Club's repeater, VE3TWO, Friday evenings ffrom 2000 hours (8:00pm) to 2100 hours (9:00pm)

Upcoming Flea Market Dates

While it is only January, Flea Market dates are being released by some amateur radio clubs which will be of interest to local amateurs.

Brampton Hamfest/Fleamarket
Saturday, March 22, 1997
Century Gardens Auditorium,
Brampton, Ontario

Pickering/Durham Region Hamfest
Saturday, April 19th, 1997.
26th or 27th

OVMRC Fleamarket
Saturday, April 26th, 1997
Stittsville Arena

Dayton Hamvention
May 16 to 18, 1997
Dayton, Ohio, U.S.A.

Rochester Hamfest
May 30 - 31, 1997
Rochester, New York, U.S.A.

OVMRC BUNNY HUNTS & OTHER CLUB HISTORY!

By Larry Wilcox VE3WEH

Last month, I wrote that Bunny Hunts have been taking place in and around the National Capital Region since 1992. I have subsequently been informed (by a very reliable source!) that "DFing", started about 1957 on 10 & 75 metres, on both bands simultaneously and "even at the same time and sometimes together" on both bands! In December 1974, the OVMRC General meeting was held for the first time at the Museum of Science & Technology after 16 years of meetings at the National Research Council on Sussex Street. It was Election Night and Bernie Best VE3SH was elected President.. Amateur Radio Station VE3JW, sponsored by the OVMRC Inc., was officially opened on March 19, 1974. Call sign VE3JW, currently in use at the station, was originally issued to Jim W. Cotter of Ottawa. The original station equipment provided by Heathkit, included a HW101 SSB transceiver, HP23B Power Supply, and SB200 Linear Amplifier. A 30' tower with a Mosley three element tri-band beam was installed on the roof. Jim W. Cotter lost his sight in early childhood when a box of dynamite caps exploded in his hands. He received his amateur license in the early 1920's and was probably the first blind radio amateur in Canada. He operated his home station under Call sign C3EN and when VE letters were allocated to Canadian amateurs, he obtained call sign VE3JW, his initials. Jim W. Cotter became a silent key on December 29, 1969 at the age of 67. Amateur Radio Station VE3JW is dedicated to his memory and to the many Amateur Radio operators who pioneered in radio communications. The objective of the station and its volunteers is still the same, to demonstrate to the general public, modern amateur radio communications and to answer questions on the many facets of amateur radio.

Potpourri

A sampling of news and comments from newsletters and newspapers from across the country - written by Jacques Choquette, VE3TSC

Monitoring Times - If you live in Beloit, Wisconsin and cause interference with your CB transmissions (such as high power), you could be fined up to $10,000. City officials took action due to recent FCC cutbacks and thus not being able to enforce the regulations. The measure was unanimously approved to prevent interference into people's telephones, televisions and stereos. "Problem is" as one amateur said, "with the first slight bit of interference, they'll be looking for the first antenna."

Newsline - The fight for amateur radio bands continues. The Jet Propulsion Lab and NASA are looking at 70 cm for a satellite carrying a Synthetic Aperture Radar system. The US, Netherlands and Japan will use this to scan tropical rain forests and desert sand. This radar will result in an intermittent very high-power flux density at the earth's surface that would interfere with terrestrial systems.

Newsline - 1996 was a good year for ham radio high altitude balloon experiments in the mid-West USA. The Windtracks suborbit satellite project involved not only dozens of hams, but also hundreds of school children. The kids assisted with balloon launches and the tracking process. Chuck WB9IHS, the project director, recruited a core of hams to become balloon chasers and builders of DF equipment.

Amateur Radio News - Kenwood Communications says that the ham radio industry must take a leadership position if the Amateur Service is to survive. An open letter painted a dismal look in that if present trends continue, the future, in 10 years, will be bleak. Kenwood plans to work hard at expanding the hobby. (Such as their plans to sell gear at truck stops)

Phil Tomas N8LJA - One of the reasons we are in danger of losing some of our bands (i.e. - VHF/UHF to the satellites) is that hams are failing to keep their operations clean. This is ammunition that could be used against us in the future. Following the large influx of no-code amateurs there has been a lack of teaching proper etiquette and of policing ourselves. It will take every amateur, club and organization working hard in a collected effort in teaching/policing use of our bands to return them to the way they once were.

Comox - Seems the fee for code test in England can be expensive: 20& for the 12 wpm and 15& for the 5 wpm

West Island (Montreal) - Hong Kong amateurs will be allowed to use special prefixes to commemorate the transfer of their land to the Chinese on July 1/97. They will change the numerals in their callsign to "97" for 1997 and "98" for 1998. The VRA-VRZ block will be allocated to China and used by the Hong Kong Administrative Region.

Key Klix, Calgary - (London Sunday Times) Arthur C Clarke the renowned science fiction writer who predicted communication satellites 50 years ago, warns that the space age could come to an abrupt end because of the proliferation of space junk. The launch of hundreds of satellites during the next 5 years could increase the amount of orbiting debris so much that future space exploration would be impossible. The greatest fear is that large objects travelling at 31K mph would cause explosive collisions where debris created by one impact crashes into objects to cause even more junk.

Ottawa - Starting Thursday, Jan 02/97, the VE3CPC weekly net at 2030 hrs on VE3MPC 147.150 (+) will begin a new venture by creating a certificate program. All stations checking in during the period Jan. 02 to June 5/97 and maintaining a 75% attendance record will be presented with a certificate from the Canadian Police College Amateur Radio Club.