

The Hamilton Amateur

The Hamilton Amateur Radio Club Newsletter 73 Years of Amateur Radio 1932-2005

The Hamilton Amateur Radio Club
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<http://www.hwcn.org/link/harc/>

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number of dedicated volunteers has been going on at a fast pace. Here are some reports to explain what has been happening and bring you up-to-date.

Several of you who were at the St. Catharines Flea market visited the HARC table where things were buzzing. Our club had two tables with items for sale, proceeds going to the Hamilton Amateur Radio Club.

In the words of Fred, VE3GCP, here's how that story unfolded.

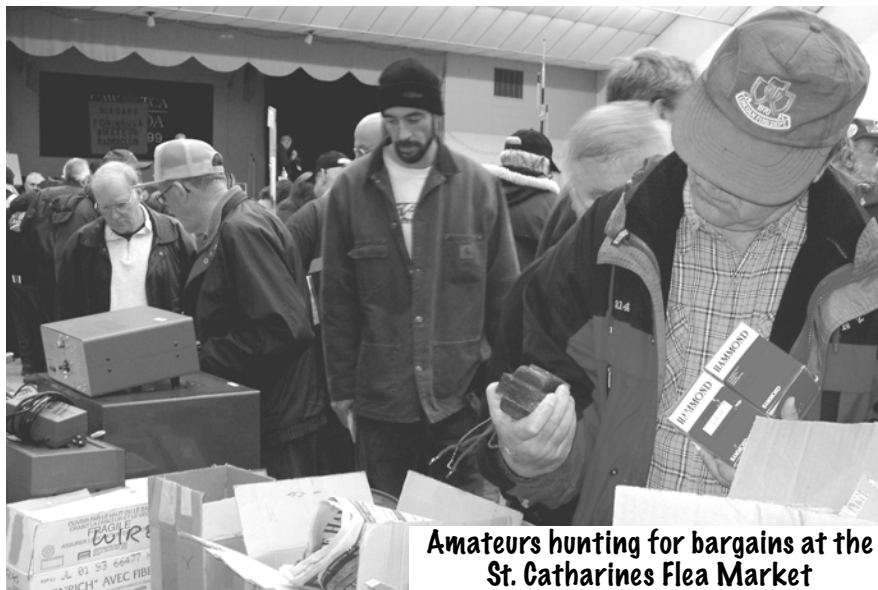
About four weeks ago, the executive of the club received an email via the club web-site advising us of the passing of one our members. The member was John Galloway VE3GGN and he became a Silent Key in December. The email was from his daughter and it went on to ask if the

club would be interested in the Amateur Radio gear that belonged to John. Mardy Eedson and Fred Robinson did respond on behalf of the club, indicating that we would help. As a result John's gear was donated to the club with the understanding that we would undertake to remove the items. There was a large amount of gear that was dated and would have no value. It was agreed that we would get all of the material out of the house by February 4, in time for the St. Catharines Flea Market. This was accomplished by way of three separate trips (of several hours each) to the property. This included the removal of an antenna and a trip to the local dump. The family was very pleased, as they stated, "this would save them a lot of work and they were happy if it would assist the club.

From the Editor's Desk

by Mardy, VE3QEE

January has been an eventful month for the Hamilton Amateur Radio Club. Behind the scenes activity by a



Amateurs hunting for bargains at the St. Catharines Flea Market

Club meetings – 3rd Wednesday each month – 8 pm (except July and August) at Hamilton District Christian High School, 92 Glancaster Road corner of Rymal Road (Hwy. #53) and Glancaster Road. Parking on location. Complimentary refreshments.

The proceeds from the sale of the gear at the flea market will be of great help to the club coffers this year. I would like to thank Mardy for the hours he put into this project and to Emsley for helping with the flea market sales. Only a small amount of material is left unsold and when we finalize this effort, an appropriate "thank you" will be forwarded to John's family on behalf of the club members. - Fred VE3GCP

Another event taking place in January was the unexpected loss of the Club room (E031B) at Mohawk College.

The room had been in use for educational activities, executive meetings and testing since 1995. An agreement was negotiated at that time by Pat Brennan, VE3EIK, and the then president of Mohawk College, (four presidents ago). Under the agreement an antenna cable was installed from the room to the roof and a support structure built on the roof for the antenna. For a few years we had a UHF - VHF antenna installed, and in recent years we had a multi-band vertical installed (which would also load up on UHF and VHF). Communication demos were a nice addition to the Basic course instruction. Back in '95 the Club executive was given two keys to the room and the room was ours to use exclusively. However, the original agreement had never been signed. In effect, we had a *de facto* arrangement which worked quite well for eleven years.

The room we were using had previously been a storage area, and was ventilated through a screen in the door to the adjacent classroom. Noises from our class sometimes were heard by the class going on next door. So we weren't overly surprised last year when the whole doorway had been bricked up and the wall painted over. That might have been clue #1.

This year when we returned for the Fall class the locks had been changed. Under a new arrangement we had to sign a key out from security each night when we used the room. The person in charge of those

arrangements vaguely remembered us, and was surprised and pleased to

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take back the keys originally issued to Linda Hardwick and Mardy Edson,

back in 1995 and recorded as such on their computer. That could have been clue #2.

A short time later two additional telephones were installed in the room, for a total of three phone outlets. That should have been clue #3.

Clue #4 and the event that made us finally start asking questions occurred the second week of January when we came in for testing. The room had been rearranged with two fine looking desks placed under the newly installed telephones and a bank of filing cabinets installed along one wall. All of the HARC stuff, had been moved to one end of the room. We realized something major was happening. Neil Galloway, who taught at Mohawk, found out that the College was totally unaware anyone was using the room. They advised us the room was now teachers' office space and we should remove any of our stuff if we wanted it.

That Saturday, a group of volunteers emptied the room and stored the items. Neil began negotiations to see if we could get alternate space for teaching the spring class which had begun that week. Thankfully, we are being allowed to use one of the regular class rooms until the end of February.

February Guest Speaker

The regular Club meeting is early this month, Wednesday February 15th at 8:00 PM. We are pleased to have Steve Parsons from Radioworld showing some new radio equipment and items of interest to amateurs. I was talking to Steve at the St. Catharines flea market when he told me that his talk would have a special focus on the needs of radio amateurs who have recently acquired HF privileges and might be looking to get set up for operating on the HF bands. Steve gave a similar talk to our Club at St. John's Ambulance where he was well received. Please attend and bring a friend. Visitors welcome.



Members at the January meeting hearing Peter Shilton VE3AX explain about Collins equipment.



Minutes of the General Meeting for January 18th, 2006

by Mardy, VE3QEE, Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 8:08 PM.

Welcome. Roger, VE3UFZ, welcomed Johnathan Davis who just got his Basic qualification a week ago and is anticipating the arrival of his call sign, and also Mark Proctor VE3RYI, a member of the contest group, and "the tower guy" who helped us out by disassembling Mike's tower at the CNIB.

Guest Speaker. Guest speaker for the evening was Peter Shilton, VE3AX. Peter has collected, restored and studied vintage Collins Radio equipment, and agreed to share with us his knowledge and passion for the Collins line. Collins Radio equipment is regarded as "top-of-the-line" equipment for its time. While the company still exists today as Rockwell-Collins, the last HAM radio gear was produced about 20 years ago. Peter began by telling us about Art Collins the founder, who was making a name for himself as a boy and who was referred to in national news, a short time later, as "Radio Wizard Art Collins". In 1931 Art

started the Collins Radio Laboratories making crystal transmitters. An early type of Collins Radio transmitter, because of its excellence, was chosen for the Admiral Bird expedition to the Antarctic. We saw pictures of the various Collins products, the factory where they were produced and the personnel. Peter illustrated every aspect of his talk with pictures and comments about the design and operation of various models. Some of these radios were produced in limited numbers and were selling for astronomical prices - comparable to the IC-7800s or the FT-9000s of our time. Today, Collins equipment is sought after for collection and restoration. These activities are supported by dedicated collectors groups, two of which are the Collins Radio Association and the Collins Collectors' Association. Following the talk Peter answered quite a few questions from the membership. A special thanks to Peter for a very

interesting and informative presentation.

Business Meeting.

Awards Presentation.

Art Ferguson certificate. When Casey took over the duties of awards Chairman, among the papers passed along was a certificate for the Art Ferguson award which Rick Danby received in 1999. Casey called upon Rick VE3BK to receive his certificate at this time. The certificate was accepted by Rick, with Roger's wry observation that delayed certificates are not unusual for Rick, who is used to receiving contest awards several years after the contest in which they had been won.

Award of Merit. Casey called upon Mardy Eedson VE3QEE to receive the Award of Merit for distinguished service to the club. In 1993 Mardy became a ham and joined the club.

Since then he has been active in major club activities. He is currently Club secretary but was president in 2003-2004 and 2004-2005. He has also served as Education Chairman and Basic Course instructor since 1998. Mardy has been organizing the annual Flea Market, and the Great Ride and Stride on the Link. He is our newsletter editor and has participated in activities like the Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal, Field Day, and work parties at the contest site. Mardy accepted the award with thanks, and wondered how Casey, Roger, and the rest of the executive were able to make this selection without his knowledge.

Secretary's Report. There were no minutes from the last meeting because it was the Christmas party. Two letters have been sent on behalf of the club. One letter was sent to the executive of the Ancaster Agricultural Society, who are contemplating the sale of their property where Merritt Hall is located and who sent out a survey to those organizations renting the facilities. The other letter was sent to confirm with Steve Parsons of Radioworld his speaking engagement at our February meeting.

Treasurer's Report. Fred made a treasurer's report. Fred was happy to report there were 47 people at the Christmas Party hosted by Murray Thompson VE3ZPV and his wife Laurel. Thanks to support of members, at this cost recovery event we were on budget. We have obtained new insurance through RAC - more insurance at a lower price. When the paper work comes through for the new policy we will be cancelling the remainder of our current policy and anticipating a refund. When we take normal costs into account it looks like we will be finishing the current year with a reserve to carry forward.

Membership Report. Emsley reported that there are 63 paid up members at this time.

Education Report. We are starting a new class tomorrow night. The

Important points

Executive Meetings

HARC Executive committee meets each month, except July and August, at Mohawk College in room E031B. All members are invited to attend and participate. The meetings are on the Tuesday following the club General Meeting each month.

VE3NCF [146.760- & 444.075+]

HARC operates VE3NCF repeater, located atop the Niagara Escarpment. It's open for use by all Amateurs. Special features are a privilege of membership.

Nets

HARC "check-in net" is held every Tuesday evening, except July and August, at 7:30pm. HARC "swap net" follows at 8pm. The ARES net is held on Thursdays at 8:00pm. All contacts are welcome.

Examinations

Amateur radio licence examinations are conducted the second Wednesday each month, except July and August. Contact the voluntary examiners to make an appointment. Each test \$5.

Membership Information

Club membership, including all privileges, is \$25 per person, per year, Sept 1 to Aug 31. Additional membership, for immediate family living in the same home, is \$1 per person. One newsletter sent to each address.

The Hamilton Amateur

The Hamilton Amateur is published ten times each year (not in July or August). Deadline for article submission is the *last Saturday* of the month for the next month's issue. Preferred format is .txt file. Articles will be checked for spelling and grammar, but the author is responsible for the factual content. E-mail submissions to Mardy, VE3QEE < ve3qee@rac.ca >

numbers won't be known before then.

Health and Welfare. Mary, VE3JGQ, had nothing to report since the last meeting. Fred brought it to our attention that Stanley had broken the same arm a second time in a fall on a sidewalk. He is on the air and recovering at home.

Contest Group. Rick, VE3BK, announced that we would be participating at the end of February in the CQ world wide 160 meter sideband contest. It is a 24 hour contest, from 0000 February 25th UTC to 2359 February 26th UTC, (Universal Time Coordinated), which translates to 7:00 PM local time on Friday February 24th until 7:00 PM local time Saturday February 25th. Rick plans to run two radios, one radio for transmitting in the contest and the other radio for listening to hear where the multiplier stations are transmitting. Since 160 meters is a night-time band we will be operating all night long. There is a pressing need for relief operators. This is an excellent learning experience for newer hams, and a great way to build your confidence working HF. We have good antennas at the site and the experienced operators to help you operate. We encourage members to join us. Arrange through Rick at 905-544-3253 or by e-mail at <rdanby@sympatico.ca>.

Lighthouse Proposal. Mark VE3RYI, an active member of the contest group, brought an idea for consideration. Over the Christmas holidays Mark made radio contact with several lighthouses. Mark is proposing that a group from HARC organize a public display of radiocommunication at a lighthouse. A display like this could draw attention to ham radio. People we contact would get a special QSL card with a picture of us at the lighthouse. All that would be needed is someone to organize the activity. We already have equipment, antennas, emergency power, operators experienced in giving these types of public demonstrations so the lighthouse idea seems possible, and a worthwhile opportunity that should not be ignored. There is a Lighthouses on the Air organization that promotes a lighthouse on the air event once or twice a year. It was suggested that we coordinate our activity with that event. From the response of members it seems like there is some interest. Roger called called for someone to investigate and organize an activity in the Spring. He observed if we get something

organized volunteers will come out to participate. The topic will be brought up at an executive meeting.

Repeater Report. Several members reported intermittent noise on the repeater. John explained that if there is a band opening we can get other repeaters triggering ours. He said that some of this noise might be locally generated and could be cleared up with a tone on the repeater to limit accidental tripping. Roger affirmed that our priority remains to install the four-bay antenna when the weather improves. We can focus on other adjustments after that.

Warplane Heritage Report. Doug explained that they had been asked to make a crystal radio similar those described in accounts of what prisoners actually made out of junk found within the prisoner-of-war camp. A crystal radio was constructed; it was tested and it worked. At first, they tried a diode for the detector. When that worked they tried using an old razor blade, donated by Frank Love. The device was shown to the curator of the Warplane Heritage Museum, and he liked it. The crystal radio will be on display in the prisoner-of-war room.

Doug also reported that the radio room had unusual visitors, 12 monks from Tibet with an interpreter. It was quite an occasion as the radio operators made on-the-air contacts. They called stations on the Maritime Mobile Net and received acknowledgement and good signal reports back. The event was reported in the newspaper.

Amateur Radio Emergency Service, (ARES). Paul VE3XPS wanted everybody to know that the first in a series of local ARES meetings was coming up at the end of the month, January 31st at the head office of Dofasco on Ottawa Street North, (turn right into the parking lot after the first set of tracks). Interested amateurs are welcome. You don't have to be members of a club to participate as this organization is independently organized under the auspices of RAC. Jerry Osborn,

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VE3JSO, is the RAC coordinator for ARES in the Hamilton area. A number of members indicated their interest in attending.

Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 10:04 PM.

Product Review: Par Electronics EF-20, a 20M End Fed Antenna

John Hudak VE3CXB

I'm one of those somewhat unfortunate hams who doesn't have acres and acres of property on which to raise long wire antennas or multielement yagis on 100 ft. towers.

Given the geometry and geography of my backyard it's a wonder I can get any type of antenna up. For my situation an end fed antenna seems to fit the bill the best.

The problem with end fed antennas is that the point at which you connect your feedline has a high impedance. And I mean "high". We're looking at upwards of thousands of ohms. High impedance means high voltages at the end. Most end fed antennas are fed with a single wire feedline. The consequences are that this could cause "RF in the shack" problems. Also end fed antennas like to work against a ground, either a ground rod, or radials or a counterpoise.

During my surfing on the internet I came across the Par Electronics EF-20 "End-Fedz" antenna. That's their play on words, not mine! What caught my eye is that the antenna would present a 50 ohm impedance to the transceiver and the antenna did not need any ground rod, radials or counterpoise wires. I discussed this with a couple of fellow hams and they said that this could not be. An end fed antenna must work against a ground of some sort. I contacted Par Electronics and asked if this were true. I got a quick reply back from owner Dale Parfitt. He assured me that indeed his antenna did not need a ground. Plus there was a transformer at the feed point which did provide for that magical 50 ohm impedance and a coax feedline.

Looking at the reviews on eham.net, out of some 40+ reports all gave the antenna a 5 out of 5. This was looking pretty good. I placed my order and within a couple of weeks the package arrived at my door.

The antenna consists of 33 ft. of "Flex Weave" wire, covered in black polyethylene insulation. The wire is connected to the transformer box by means of ring type crimp connector attached to the wire. This box is very small, maybe 1 1/2 inches by 3 inches at most. The wire connects to a threaded stud on the transformer box, with all hardware being stainless steel. The SO-239 output connector is silver plated with teflon insulation.

It appears to be of high quality. There is of course a mounting hole at one end of the transformer box for the support cable/rope. The box is PVC and is totally sealed to the weather. As such I could not see what is inside. I looked at Par's website for any hint of what was inside but there was nothing. Whatever is in there has to transform the thousands of ohms down to 50 ohms and be able to withstand somewhat high voltages. Please note that this antenna is rated at 100 watts, so if you're thinking of running your kilowatt linear forget it. The free end of the antenna came with a small PVC end insulator. It's maybe 3/8 of an inch in diameter and has a hole for the support rope and three small holes in which you thread the end of the antenna wire. I must admit that I was underwhelmed by this end insulator. I'm sure it works just fine but it just didn't look like a proper antenna insulator to me so I made up a larger one out of PVC rod. You could also use a commercially available insulator if the small stock insulator puts you off.

Before I put the antenna up I sealed all the connections. I used liquid electrical tape and some of that stretchy silicone rubber tape. It's sort of like "Coax Seal" but in tape form. I used a high quality PL-259 connector and RG-8X coax feedline. The antenna is up about 30 feet off the ground running between my house and a big walnut tree. The antenna is partially up in the canopy of the trees, so I was concerned as to how this might affect my signal. The antenna runs more or less Northeast/Southwest.

Dale Parfitt said the antenna should be reasonably flat across the 20m band and should be resonant within the band. However in case that does not happen at your QTH there is supplied a short piece of wire to act as a tuning stub. I didn't bother using this stub and just decided to go for broke. Besides, I could just use my antenna tuner if need be.

My rig is a Yaesu FT-840 and I ran it at it's maximum output of 100 watts. I switched to CW mode and momentarily keyed the rig. No smoke! The SWR meter hardly

VE7's and all provinces in between. I've worked Oregon, Maine, Delaware, Florida, Missouri, Louisiana plus some of the closer states. I've also had contacts with Lithuania, England, Italy, Spain, Canary Is., St. Croix, and Costa Rica.

Of course this antenna is not going to compete with a multi element yagi at 100 ft. or a nice big quad, but it does work. If conditions are not too bad then I can usually work them. I'm still not sure of the directionality of this antenna. I seem to be able to catch stations in just about any

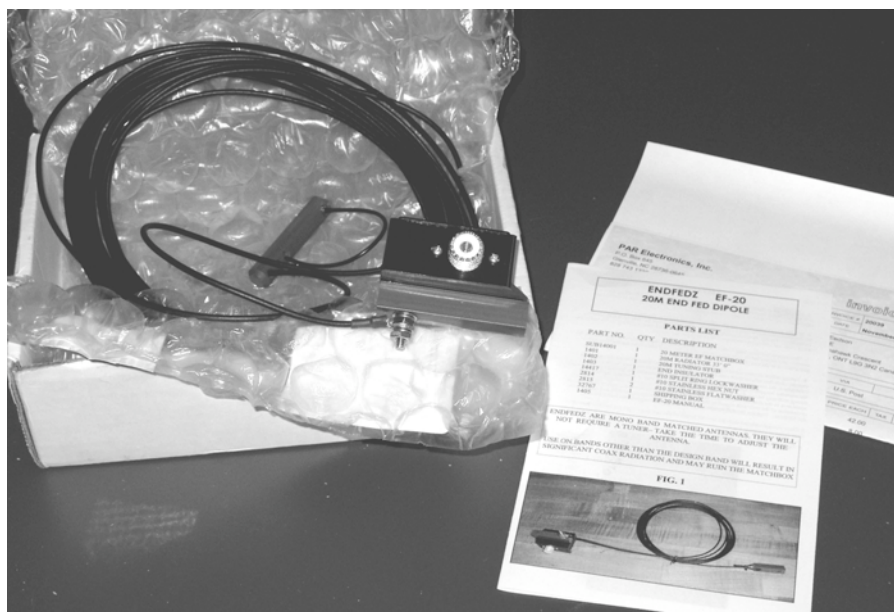
direction, both broadside and off the ends. Of course one end (the Southwest end) points towards the "empty" part of the Pacific where there aren't many stations. However most of Canada is off one side of the antenna, and most of Europe is off the Northeast end. It doesn't seem to make much difference.

With the help of Emsley, VE3JAI, along with his trusty antenna analyser gizmo

box we checked the impedance and SWR of the antenna. The SWR was darned near flat and stayed pretty much close to 1:1.6 across the band. When I first started using the antenna I ran it through an antenna tuner, but after a while I decided it wasn't necessary and I now just run the rig straight through. I've not experienced any problems and my Palstar SWR/Power meter seems to confirm that pretty near all of the RF is getting out there and very little is coming back at me.

One other thing is that this antenna is stealthy. I've had people standing right under it and not see it. Even after I told them there was an

Unpacking the 20 meter ENDFEDZ antenna from Par Electronics



moved at all and the power meter said I was putting out darned near 100 watts. I then switched to USB and put out a CQ. Nothing heard. Oh great, this antenna is a dud, thought I. I tuned around the band and came across HA8RM calling CQ DX. My first test would be a Hungarian ham. I gave him a call and he came right back to me. He said I was coming in 57. Wow! We had a nice little QSO in which he said he had no trouble at all copying me.

I don't work 20m as much as I do 40m or 80m, but I do get up there on occasion. So far I've had no difficulty at all working both east and west coasts. I've had QSO's with VE1's and

antenna up there. Some had to follow the feedline up to find it. Reports on the internet say that it is a very good stealth antenna. Others report it to be very good for travelling, not needing any sort of ground. It's been used as a horizontal, a sloper, a vertical, or an attic antenna. Some have said they've just thrown it over the balcony and let it hang down the side of a building and it still seems to work well.

If there is a drawback it would be the 100 watt power limit. Of course on phone it's not going to stress the transformer, but CW, RTTY or other digital modes might. Dale Parfitt says that with the more higher duty cycle modes of communication it would be a good idea to back off on the power. There are versions for 20m up to 2m but at present there is no 40m version. There used to be a multiband antenna in the past but it is no longer available. I hear Par will be bringing a 40m version out in the future and it might even be multiband, but so far there is no mention of it on the web site. By the way, the web site is: <http://parelectronics.com/index.html>

They've got some other nifty items too so check it out.

So, there you have it. Another one of my overly verbose product reviews. So far I'm quite happy with this antenna. It gets me out on 20m quite nicely. I might even try one when we travel, but I guess I'll have to buy another one as opposed to taking this one down. By the way, the cost when I bought it was around \$50 U.S. Check it out if you have need for a stealthy end fed antenna.

I have no connection to Par Electronics. I'm just a happy customer.

Beyond Murphy's Law

This information was found on a clipping tucked away in the pages of a book among the donated items from the estate of the Late John Galloway, VE3GGN

In any organized endeavour there seem to be operating certain mystical, unalterable laws, Some of the most famous of these are:

Murphy's law: If something can go wrong, it will.

Weiler's law: Nothing is impossible for the man who doesn't have to do it himself.

Chisolm's law: Anytime things appear to be going better, you have overlooked something.

Finagle's law: Once a job is fouled up, anything done to improve it makes it worse.

Crane's law: There is no such thing as a free lunch.

Local ARES Website Launched

Paul, VE3XPS, invites members to check out this new web site featuring the plans and activities of our local ARES organization. Here are the details:

As most of you know, ARES has started up in the Hamilton area. The first meeting was January 31 and quite a few of the club members attended. Jerry, VE3JSO, is the EC for the local chapter of ARES. Please check out the following webpage for more details,

<http://www.ares-ham.ca/>
All ARES events and photos will be displayed on the webpage along with other related information.

73- de Paul, VE3XPS

Ten Meters Lives!

by Mardy, VE3QEE

I reported in the December issue of THA a string of contacts made on 10 meters (28 - 29.7 MHz) during a contest at the contest site. We are just about at the bottom of the current sun spot cycle and ten meters is supposed to be dead, so I found that success quite surprising.

Ten meters is a special band for a couple of reasons. A beam antenna or a quad built for ten meters is small compared to similar antennas for 20 or 40 meters. You could even squeeze one on your apartment balcony. Also, it is much easier at this wave length to elevate your antenna an effective distance above ground. With a few watts you can work the world on ten meters when the band is open. Lastly, the band is 1700 KHz wide. Compare that to 500 KHz on 80 meters and, unlike 80 meters, you can have a single antenna that tunes flat for the whole band. I was reading from the ARRL newsletter and came across a report about 10 meters which seems to support my observations that the band is not dead. I reprinted part of that report, below, because I thought it had some good suggestions for those who might be encouraged to give the band a try.

Suggestions for using 10 Meters

More 10 meter mail arrived this week. Glenn Stewart, N7NRA of Mesa, Arizona reminds us to check for beacons between 28.2 and 28.3 MHz. Glenn says, "If you hear beacons, there is a very good likelihood that you can raise a PSK31 contact or two by calling CQ on PSK at 28.120. If you get lucky and find half a dozen or so PSK signals at 28.120, and if some of them are strong, head for 28.345 - 28.350 and call CQ on Phone. Chances are excellent that you'll raise a phone contact or two. The band's not dead. The problem is that everyone is listening. No one is calling CQ. Give it a try!"

Also in Arizona, and on 10 meters, is Hank Pfizenmayer, K7HP in Phoenix, about 15 miles northwest of N7NRA. He said that on December 26, 2005 on 10 meters from 2137-2220z he worked KP2L, KP4DKE, S9SS, MM0SLH, VE3FGU and ZL1BYZ. The next day he worked ZL2BSJ, ZL1BYZ and ZL3KR. He says, "I listen just about every day to the 10 meter beacons, usually a couple times at least, and it would be easier to list

days that I do not hear a beacon somewhere. I have found I can call CQ on CW for long periods with no activity at all even though I am hearing beacons all over the east coast."

If you do try 10 meters with success drop us a note so we can mention it in the next issue. - ed

Information About Home Brew Night

In the January issue of THA you may recall the reminder, "Don't forget to enter a project for Homebrew Night in May". Casey, VE3CVP, our Awards Chairman, has some information about the Home Brew Award and wants to ensure you have enough time to get a project ready for the May meeting if you have something brewing.

The Crawford ("home brew") Trophy is awarded annually to the best home made device for use in the amateur radio shack.

The name "home brew" portrays the idea that the device was constructed in the home workshop, thereby requiring skill and patience in producing a product of quality. It also suggests that the device was made at home during leisure hours, rather than at the place of employment.

PURPOSE

To encourage radio amateurs to build their own equipment. The prime purpose for making a device would be for improved amateur radio communications, and/or for testing amateur equipment.

RULES

1. The device shall have been completed in the twelve months prior to the contest.

2. Although a limited number of operations in the fabrication of the device may be processed outside the home workshop, the majority of the work shall be done in the contestant's own workshop or that of a friend during leisure hours



Jerry Osborn, VE3JSQ, hosting the recent ARES meeting at the Dofasco offices.



**Participants in the Fall of 2005 Basic Amateur Radio Course
Johnathan Davis, Lucas, Patrick Maille, Anita Thomas, and Lindsay Crough**

3. A contestant is to be given an opportunity to explain operation and purpose of the device, and any other details deemed helpful about the construction.

In past years the presentations have been judged during the coffee break and the award presented at the start of the business portion of the meeting. I hope we have enough entries to make Home Brew an entertaining and competitive event.

73 de VE3CVP, Casey.



Rick Danby, VE3BK, Mary Urbanski, VE3OGQ, and Neil Galloway, VE3VNG, enjoying coffee at the HARC January meeting.