

The Hamilton Amateur Radio Club
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 Est. 1932 Inc. 1956
<http://www.hwcn.org/link/harc/>

The Hamilton Amateur

The Hamilton Amateur Radio Club Newsletter 74 Years of Amateur Radio 1932-2006

Future Meetings

Just a reminder that there is no general meeting in December. Instead, members and friends were invited to attend the annual Christmas Party, on Wednesday, December 13, (the second Wednesday in December) at the Royal Hamilton Yacht Club.

Announcing a QSL Card Design Contest

The year 2007 marks the 75th year of continuous operation for the Hamilton Amateur Radio Club, (1932 —2007).

To celebrate the Club's 75th anniversary HARC will produce a special QSL card to be used throughout the year. Members are invited to participate in the QSL card design contest. The winning entry will be picked by a committee and the chosen card will be printed for distribution during the commemorative year. Designs will be accepted from individuals or groups. Join in the fun and put your ideas forward. This is a time to celebrate our accomplishments and remember our past. So put your thoughts together and help us produce a card of which we can all be proud. Contest closes on the Wednesday following the January meeting.

Guest Speaker for January Meeting

Hot air, it seems, has always been a popular subject at our club meetings....so, the executive is proud to announce that **Steve Bratina** from Cambridge will visit us at the January 17th meeting; with a presentation on the subject of Live Steam Engines and Locomotives. His hobby is restoring these things and he will be illustrating his talk with a Power Point presentation Steve's interest began as a young boy doing H.O. and 3/4 scale live steam locomotives. Later he moved on to doing full size restorations. He has taught and worked on live steam and is now building a 1920s Powerhouse in his back yard. And....yes he is related to Hamilton's well known Bratina family.

SPECIAL NOTE: the meeting room will be open at 7PM for rag chew and our new meeting start time is now 7:30 PM. C U there.

The Tale of the Little Backwards Sunspot and the New Solar Cycle

by John Hudak VE3CXB

Word had been going around about the end of August that the first sunspot of the new solar cycle has

In This Issue

Future Meetings----- 1
 QSL Design Contest--- 1
 The Little Backwards Sun Spot----- 1
 HARC Executive----- 2
 US Band Changes----- 3
 Golden Age of Radio--- 3
 HARC Chairs-----3
 Important Points----- 4
 Pictorial----- 5
 Nov. 15 Meeting Minutes----- 6
 Contest Corner----- 7
 Basic Plus HF Privileges 7
 Web Sites for Morse Code----- 8
 A 5¢ Dose of Morse Code----- 8

Rumor Has It ...

Two hydrogen atoms met. One said "I lost my electron," The other said, "Are you sure?" The first replied "Yes, I'm positive."

Club meetings – 3rd Wednesday each month – 7:30 pm (except July and August) at Hamilton District Christian High School, 92 Glanaster Road corner of Rymal Road (Hwy. #53) and Glanaster Road. Parking on location. Complimentary refreshments.

appeared. You can read the actual report here:

http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2006/15aug_backwards.htm?list26478

The article makes reference to the "backward" sunspot. What do they mean by this, and why does this herald the beginning of the next solar cycle? Without going into the physics of the sun in too deep a manner, we know that sunspots have magnetic polarities. Of course we cannot actually go to the sun and measure any magnetic fields - it's just a bit too toasty there! We can though infer the presence of magnetic fields by using certain scientific techniques and observing certain physical effects.

Sunspots are dark areas on the sun's surface which appear darker than their surroundings by virtue of their being cooler. They are caused when very strong subsurface magnetic field lines poke out of the sun's surface, which leads to a cooling effect, thus the darkening of the sun's hot surface that we call sunspots. Most sunspots come in pairs, one is called the "leader" and the other is called the "follower" or "trailer". Due to the sun's rotation the sunspots move across the face of the sun from west to east, therefore the spot leading the pair in this journey is called the "leader". Each spot in the pair has an associated magnetic polarity. Think of them in terms of a bar magnet with a north (N) and south (S) pole. One sunspot of the pair will have one magnetic polarity and the other will be the opposite. For example, the leader might be the one with the north pole (N) and the follower will have the south pole (S) - just like a bar magnet. It could just as well be the other way around with the leader being south and the follower being north.

Now, when a new sunspot cycle starts, the spots start forming high up in latitude on the sun. In other words the spots form more towards the north and south poles of the sun. As the solar cycle progresses the spots tend to form closer and closer

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towards the sun's equator. Here's the kicker. In any given solar cycle the sunspot pairs in the northern hemisphere of the sun will have polarities "opposite" to those sunspot pairs in the southern hemisphere. For example, if the sunspot pairs in the north are arranged N and S, then the sunspot pairs in the south will be arranged S and N. Then, when the next solar cycle starts this will be reversed. The northern pairs will be S and N, and the southern pairs will be N and S. The time between these reversals of sunspot magnetic fields is approximately 11 years, although it can vary by plus or minus a few years in any given solar cycle.

OLD SUNSPOT CYCLE compared to the NEW SUNSPOT CYCLE:

Northern Hemisphere Pairs
N S
S N

Southern Hemisphere Pairs
S N
N S

Are you still with me? Just to confuse things even more, to be technically correct the sun's sunspot cycle is not really 11 years but is actually 22 years. It takes 11 years for one reversal but for things to come back to the way they were takes two reversals, therefore the sun's solar cycle is really 22 years in length. It's just that common usage refers to the period from one maximum to the next maximum as a "solar cycle", without regard for the magnetic polarities. When we heard back on August 15 that the first "backwards" sunspot appeared, marking the beginning of the new solar cycle, all this meant was that this new, tiny sunspot's magnetic fields were reversed from the other sunspots in the same hemisphere. However don't expect things to start picking up any time soon. This new "backwards" spot didn't last very long. It will be a while before we start seeing more and more spots with "backwards" magnetic fields. It will still take a few years for the sun's activity to pick up and create those great conditions that allow us to use the 10 metre band again. However, watch what you wish for. Scientists are predicting that this next cycle will be very active. They are able to make this prediction due to new observational techniques and new theories on how the sun's innerds work. Along with a more active cycle will come more disruptive episodes where we have more and stronger solar flares, and thus stronger geomagnetic disturbances. We could be looking at higher levels of radio blackouts and storms where you won't be able to get through at all. In between those disturbed periods though, propagation should be very good. This may be a case where you can literally work the world on one

watt, or even less on CW. Only time will tell if these predictions are correct. And in the end, isn't this part of the fun of ham radio - pitting our wits, our technique and our equipment against what mother nature throws at us - using the art and science of radio to communicate with others of like mind?
GUD DX'ing
John Hudak VE3CXB

U.S. Band Changes

On Nov. 22, 2006 an ARRL bulletin outlined the new FCC Amateur Band changes taking effect on Dec. 15th. Reprinted with permission.

With publication in the Federal Register November 15, the long-awaited changes to the amateur rules are set to take effect 30 days later, at 12:01 AM EST December 15. The so-called "Omnibus" Amateur Radio proceeding, WT Docket 04-140, includes a significant expansion of the 75 meter phone band and a variety of other changes. The highlights:

- For Amateur Extra class licensees, the 75 meter phone band will start at 3600 kHz, while Advanced class licensees start at 3700 kHz and Generals at 3800 kHz. The high end of the CW/RTTY/Digital band is now 3600 kHz (although CW is allowed on the entire band).
- On 40 meters, Amateur Extra and Advanced licensees will be able to operate phone beginning at 7125 kHz, while Generals start at 7175 kHz. The top end of the CW/RTTY/Digital band will be 7125 kHz (although CW is allowed on the entire band).
- There are no changes to the 20 meter band.
- On 15 meters, the General class phone band now starts at 21275 kHz.
- On 10 meters, Novice and Technician Plus licensees can now operate CW/RTTY/Digital from 28000 kHz to 28300 kHz.
- In addition, Novices and Tech Plus licensees can use CW only on the same frequencies as General and Advanced licensees on the 80, 40 and 15 meter bands: 3525 kHz-3600 kHz; 7025 kHz-7125 kHz and 21025 kHz-21200 kHz.

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The Golden Age of Radio, Part I

Submitted by Roger Pimm, VE3UFZ

What happened when a "HAM" radio operator put a microphone in front of a record player? Modern radio was born. Here is the start of the story...

Long before videos or DVDs, even before television, families used to gather nightly for their favourite programs. They'd sit around the family radio and listen to popular comedies, dramas, and variety shows. Here's how it all started.

Listen To This

Have you ever heard this joke about Alexander Graham Bell? "When he invented the phone, who did he talk to? He was the only guy with a phone." It was the same with radio when it started out. The only people who owned radios were hobbyists who built their sets themselves. There were no radio stations, as we now know them – these radio amateurs, or HAMS, built their own transmitters and receivers so they could talk to each other. There were enthusiastic about their hobby and spent a lot of time talking about their radios: what kind of equipment they had, how much power they were using, and how well they were receiving each other's signals. But even dedicated hams got a little tired of the conversation after a while.

One day in October 1919, Frank Conrad, a ham in Wilkesburg, Pennsylvania, got so bored with talking that he pushed a phonograph up to his microphone and played a record of the Stephen Foster song "Old Black Joe". In the past, Conrad's transmissions had always been directed toward one particular person. The time, he sent "Old Black Joe" out over the air waves to no one in particular...and made radio history. He called this new form of communication "broadcasting".

And Now A Word From Our Sponsors

Conrad continued to play records

over the air and was soon deluged with letters from other radio operators thanking him and requesting specific songs. He couldn't honour them all, so instead he announced that he would play records on Wednesday and Saturday nights, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. After he'd gone through his own record collection a few times, a local record store offered to lend him more. Conrad returned the favour (and made history again) by telling his listeners that the records were for sale at the store. It was the first commercial ever aired.

An Industry is Born

Over time Conrad's regular broadcasts became so popular that the local Joseph Horne department store began selling \$10 ready-made crystal radio receivers to people who wanted to listen to Conrad's broadcasts but didn't want to build their own radios. The store advertised its radios in local newspapers.

Taking out newspaper ads may not sound like a very big deal, but it made all the difference. Although a few other people had played music over the air even earlier than Conrad (Reginald Fessenden, the man credited with inventing AM radio, played Christmas music and read Bible verses to ships at sea on Christmas eve, 1906), nothing had come of those early broadcasts. Conrad worked as an engineer at Westinghouse, a company that manufactured electrical equipment for power plants, and he had been urging his company to get into the radio broadcasting business. But it wasn't until Harry P. Davis, a Westinghouse vice president, saw the crystal radios advertised in the paper that someone in a position to do something about it finally realized that radio had potential far beyond the small pool of hams who built their own sets.

On The Air

Davis figured the big money in radio would come from manufacturing and selling receivers, but he also knew that people had to have more to listen to than Conrad's records two

nights a week. He decided that Westinghouse should build its own radio station, one that would broadcast every night.

The 1920 presidential election was less than a month away – why not start the new service with a bang, by broadcasting the results of the race between Warren G. Harding and James M. Cox? Davis put Conrad to work building a radio station on the roof of the Westinghouse plant in East Pittsburgh; he finished with time to spare. The station received its license – with its call letters, KDKA – on October 27, 1920, and began broadcasting election returns at 7 p.m. on Election Day, November 2. Listening audience: between 500 and 1,000 people. During the broadcast Conrad stayed home and manned his own station, ready to take over in case KDKA went off the air. But it didn't – the broadcast continued without a hitch until noon the following day (Harding won in a landslide). The station is still on the air today.

The Radio Craze

Radio started slowly at first and then exploded. In 1921 only eight more radio stations received licenses to broadcast; by the end of 1922 another 550 stations around the country were on the air. Now that there was something to listen to, Americans began buying radios as fast as manufacturers could make them. Sales went from almost none in 1920 to \$60 million in 1922; sales more than doubled in 1923 and doubled again in 1924, and kept climbing after that. By 1926 radios were a \$500 million per year business.

Another important development paralleled the tremendous growth in radio sales: the linking of individual radio stations – first into regional "chains," as they were called, and then into national networks. AT&T started the trend in 1923 when engineers figured out how to link the company's 18 radio stations by telephone so a program originating in one station could be broadcast simultaneously over every station in the network. By 1924 AT&T was broadcasting coast to coast.

Important Points

Executive Meetings

HARC Executive committee meets each month, except July and August. 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 at 7:30 p.m. HARC "swap net" follows at 8 p.m. All contacts are welcome.

Examinations

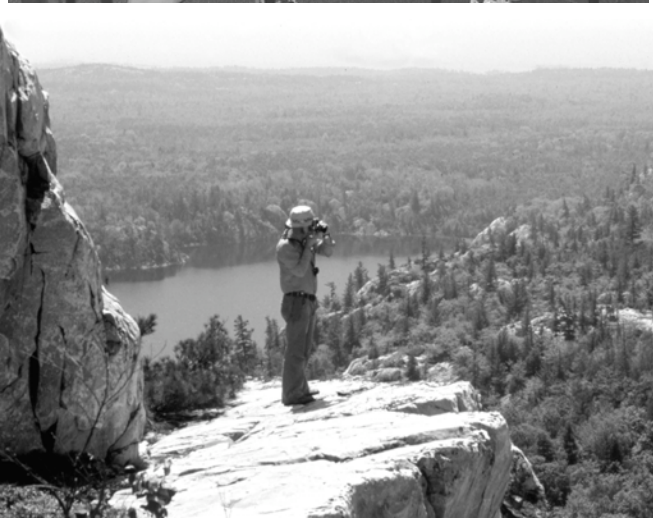
Amateur radio license examinations are conducted the second Wednesday of each month, except July and August. Contact the voluntary examiners to make an appointment. There will be a fee for each examination.

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 factual content. E-mail submissions to Editor, John Hudak VE3CXB, <hudakjm@mcmaster.ca>



Pictures from the November club meeting.

Top left, John, VE3DVV, Roger, VE3UFZ and Mike VE3MHX adjusting the projector; top right Don VE3EIK, Doug VE3NBL, Bob VA3MFM; Norm VE3ZKO, Gord VE3AAH socializing. Center left, Kevin VE3HNG and David VE3DWJ choosing connectors; center right, Dan VA3DJ, and Paul VE3XPS exchanging views. Bottom left, Lorrain VA3NZ, Fred VE3GCP, and Bernie VE3EKY / VA3XJ during Fred's presentation; bottom right shows a view from Pukaskwa National Park near the highest point in Ontario.

In 1926 AT&T sold its radio stations to the Radio Corporation of America (RCA), which combined them with its own stations to form the National Broadcasting Company (NBC). The founding of NBC is considered the start of the golden age of radio.

The Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) was formed in 1927, and the third network – Mutual Broadcasting – went on air in 1934. In the early 1940s, an into-trust decision by the U.S. Supreme Court forced NBC to split into two independent companies. One part was sold off the Lifesavers president Edward J. Noble in 1943 and was renamed the American Broadcasting Company (ABC).

The foregoing account is from Uncle John's Curiously Compelling Bathroom Reader (19th Edition)

This was just the beginning of broadcast radio. For more on the "little box's" Golden Age, check out our next club bulletin for Part II.

November 15, 2006 General Meeting Minutes

by Secretary Roger, VE3UFZ

This General Meeting got off to a rather difficult start. The usual order of business is to have a presentation followed by a short business meeting. This month however there were some equipment problems. The overhead projector was particularly stubborn and refused to make the traditional "handshake" with Fred's VE3GCP computer. As it turned out, the problem was with the projector and after some scurrying around, the projector across the hall worked just fine. This was discovered only after a yeoman effort on the part of Mardy VE3QEE who raced home to collect his Apple computer – only to find out on returning to the meeting that his computer wouldn't make the "handshake" with the projector in our classroom either. The end result was that we had our business

meeting first, followed by Fred's presentation on a different projector, in a different room. Fred, VE3GCP spoke about his trek to the highest geographical location in Ontario which was made sometime back in the 70's (when Fred had more hair anyway). At the height of his trek, both literally and figuratively, Fred made contact with people in Hamilton on 2 meters from the Western shore of Lake Superior using a portable stacked beam antenna and going through several linked repeaters and a telephone patch. It was really a TERRIFIC presentation. The scenery was breathtaking and the pictures surely did justice to the rustic location. THANK YOU FRED!



Business Meeting

The business meeting was convened by Roger VE3UFZ at 8:10pm. Roger was standing in for Mardy VE3QEE while he made his emergency round trip home to collect a backup computer. In attendance were 32 members and non-members. Visitors were introduced: Joseph Plastino, Sherry Goeller VE3ZQV, Colin Daniels VE3GCD.

Reports of Executive and Chairs

Secretary

Roger has sent a thank you letter to the Pathfinder leader who organized the food concession at our annual Flea Market. Also, there is currently no new news on the renewal of our insurance through RAC. Roger has been informed by RAC not to panic since they (RAC) are currently up to their neck with paper work and our current policy will remain in force till they get around to the renewal process.

Treasurer

Fred VE3GCP reported that we are

in good financial shape, but made an impassioned plea for past members to renew their membership and so boost our membership numbers. Tickets for the annual Christmas dinner are on sale for a price of \$30.00. The Christmas dinner will be held at the Royal Hamilton Yacht Club. Reservations may be made by calling Fred; payment may be made on the night of the dinner.

Membership

Emsley VE3JAI reported that we currently have 47 paid up members, 44 of which are paid up primary members.

Education

Mardy VE3QEE reported that Basic classes are continuing. Mike VE3MHX reported that he has two people interested in working on the Advanced HAM course, perhaps starting in January 2007. During the meeting another 2 potential advanced students were identified.

Health and Welfare

Mary VE3OCQ reported that she has sent a condolence card to the family of Joe Bienkeiwicz VE3BWZ who recently became a Silent Key. An announcement was sent to RAC to place a notice in their next magazine issue.

Flea Market

The preliminary report indicates that we were within \$75 of previous year's net revenue. The Pathfinders have agreed to operate the food concession again next year. We have made a deposit with The Ancaster Agricultural Society for 2007, our 75th Anniversary Year, and have secured our traditional location.

Contest

Rick VE3BK presented several more certificates for contests that the contest group were involved in. The results from Field Day 2005, 2nd in Canada and 1st in Ontario. The new certificates were presented to Casey VE3CVP, our Awards Chairman.

The awards were as follows:

1st place in Ontario - RAC Winter Contest 2001 - Multi Operator
1st place in Ontario - RAC Winter Contest 2002 - Multi Operator

Just a brief note: on 14.135 MHz every Monday evening around 7:00pm there is a rag chew that some of our more persistent members are attempting to get started. If you are HF certified, you are encouraged to PTT and try your luck. This is an excellent way to tune up your rigs and experiment with 20M on short haul paths.

ARES

Lorraine VE3NZ reported that some members of the CERV group have been going up to the Canadian Warplane Heritage on a semi-regular basis on Saturdays. On a recent visit Lorraine encountered an 82 year old gentleman who was once a repair technician during WWII. He worked on the famous 19 sets used in a variety of WWII aircraft and vehicles. Mr. McCurdy was looking for a repair manual for the 19 set. Lorraine was pleased to produce a copy of the manual for Mr. McCurdy that Al had found in the radio room. Needless to say, Mr. McCurdy was thrilled to see the manual. There must have been many fond memories that the manual triggered. Lorraine took a picture of Mr. McCurdy and sent it to him via Email. A wonderful Email response was sent back to Lorraine thanking her for her kindness and reminiscing about his experience in WWII radio rooms.

CWHM

The radio shack at the museum is manned every Thursday afternoon and all members and a single guest are welcome to visit. Membership in HARC entitles you to enter the museum free any time that the museum is open.

Repeater

John VE3DVB reported that the backup battery system has been disconnected because the batteries and charger system are over 7 years old. The batteries will probably need to be replaced and the charger system diagnosed to eliminate the still existing hum problem. John hopes to have the IRLP link set up in about a month.

Minutes Approval

A motion was made by Roger

VE3UFZ, seconded by Casey VE3CVP, that the minutes of the September General Meeting be adopted as published in the club bulletin. Voted and carried.

Motion by Roger VE3UFZ, seconded by Mike VA3MXS, that the business meeting adjourn at 8:50pm. Carried.

Contest Corner

An invitation to work the RAC Winter Contest from Rick Danby, VE3BK.



Hi Everyone. Time to plan to attend or operate with the Contest Group for the RAC Winter Contest. It is on a weekend and not on New Years Eve. so plan to help out. Sometimes it comes during the week or on New Years Eve which makes it a bad time to plan on helping out. Everyone usually spends time with family or goes to a party on New Years, but this year is a good time. Hope to see you all there. Please let me know what your plans are this year.....The more the merrier, just remember that we run Multi-multi for this one. That means separate stations with power. We are in it for the fun and to train hams who aren't really familiar with contesting. This is a good one, relaxed attitude where we work as many Canadian hams as possible, and work the American hams too, that want to help out in our Canadian Contest. There are many of them.

The date this year is December 30, 2006 from 0:00 UTC to 23:59 UTC. This translates to 7 PM local time on Friday December 29, 2006 to 7 PM

local time on the Saturday December 30, 2006

73 Rick VE3BK

Basic + HF Privileges Clarification by RAC

The following clarification was sent to members in the RAC e-mail bulletin.

Since Industry Canada removed the mandatory requirement for the Morse Qualification for access to the HF bands below 30 MHz on July 22, 2005, there has been confusion as to whether amateurs with a "Basic Plus" qualification (without Morse Code) are permitted to use the HF bands in other countries. A spokesperson for the FCC's Amateur Division has clarified the situation regarding the Reciprocal Operating Agreement between Canada and the United States:

A Canadian Basic Plus licensed operator located within the US, US-controlled territories or US territorial waters has the same HF privileges as in Canada, insofar as those privileges do not exceed those granted to US Extra Class amateurs.

A Canadian licensed operator operating within the US or US waters must comply with US regulations for the Amateur Radio Service. Their operating privileges can be no more than those of a US Extra Class Amateur. This means that Canadian amateurs in the US cannot, for example, use SSB below 7150 KHz on the 40 meter band, as they are able to do in Canada or in international waters. Industry Canada has confirmed that this statement is consistent with IC's understanding of the reciprocal operating treaty between Canada and the US. The situation in other countries varies from country to country. Many countries have still retained the Morse requirement for HF, and some countries continue to require a Morse qualification for HF operation by amateurs visiting from other countries. Basic Plus operators planning to visit countries other than the US and wishing to operate on HF

while traveling should contact the regulatory authorities in those countries before leaving Canada.

Three Web Sites for Morse Code

The following e-mail was received from David Malar, one of the students taking the Basic Course. His e-mail has been reprinted with permission.

Hi Mardy,

I've got three links for you...

<http://www.aa9pw.com/radio/morse.html> - This is a website that will let you choose your cw skill level and will then send you an audio file with a cw qso transmission that you can listen to and decode. You can then compare what you copied with the text of the conversation that the website provides. It's a pretty good practice tool.

http://www.mrx.com.au/d_cwcom.htm (home page is <http://www.mrx.com.au>) – This is the CW chat program called CW Comm that I mentioned in class today. It's a free download that you can use to practice CW live with other hams or morse enthusiasts over the internet. I've only been on it for three days now, but am finding it to be a terrific tool – great real-life practice, and fun chatting with other users, potentially anywhere in the world.

Morse can be keyed by using the down-arrow button on your computer keyboard, or you can hook up a morse key to the serial port on your computer.

I've built a straight key for myself, and it is working nicely. The only complication was that my computer (laptop) doesn't have a serial port, and I didn't discover that until After I'd built the 9-pin serial cable for it! Fortunately, I had a serial-to-USB cable (sometimes it's handy being in the computer business) and was able to get it working via one of my USB ports. Anyhow, it's great fun.

<http://www.jericho-forum.com/showthread.php?tid=80&page=1> – If you've ever watched the new TV show Jericho, you might have noticed that towards the beginning of each episode when the title and theme music is played, in the background, you can hear some morse code being sent. For fun, a few weeks ago I recorded the audio for that portion of the show and decoded the morse, and then poked around on the internet to see if anyone else had had the same idea. It turns out that they definitely had, and that, in fact, each episode actually has a different, sometime cryptic message in the title sequence. The link is to a web forum where some hams have decoded and discussed all the episodes to present.

Thanks David for the interesting links and for permission to pass them along.

A 5¢ Dose of Morse Code -- Part of our Canadian Heritage

by Mardy Eedson, VE3QEE

Morse code has shown up in other curious locations through time. When

our small group of students was taking the Basic Course from Bernie Granby, VE3EKY / VA3XJ back in 1993, code training was included with our Basic instruction. At that time, Bernie pointed out that several Canadian "Victory" twelve-sided nickels issued during the Second World War had a morse code message around the edge.

To my disappointment, a modern commemorative copy of that same "Victory" nickel, which was circulated in 2005, didn't have the Morse code message. Maybe the people at the Mint didn't know the message was there, or they couldn't figure out what the funny marks were. Take a look at the pictures of "Victory Nickels" from 1943, 1944 and 1945, and look for the dots and dashes around the edge. Because these coins are worn the code is hard to read. The message from the coins has been reproduced below, so you can figure out what it says.

Incidentally, during the war years some metals were in limited supply and needed for military products. So, five cent coins were made of other metals. Two coins in the photo are made of brown metal.

