

The Hamilton Amateur

The Hamilton Amateur Radio Club Newsletter 76 Years of Amateur Radio 1932-2008

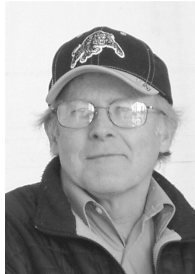
The Hamilton Amateur Radio Club
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<http://www.hamiltonarc.ca/>

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President's Message

by David Bruton,
 VE3DWJ



By the time you read the President's message it will be the year 2009. I hope everyone had a good Christmas and I wish everyone a Happy New Year.

The economic conditions were looking bleak at the year-end. Many investments have been giving a poor return. However, all indications say the markets will rebound in the future. I do not have a crystal ball, but I do have hope for better days. In the meantime we have a great hobby which is free to pursue, and good friends on the air to talk with. As an aside, I hope some members did receive appropriate Christmas gifts to improve their enjoyment of the amateur radio hobby.

At this time I would like to thank Anita VA3ANI and Lorraine VA3NZ for an outstanding job of getting the Christmas Dinner off to a roaring success. It took many hours (100 or more) of preparations to make it happen. There were many things to do, such as contacting Canadian Warplane Museum, collecting money, arranging for cheques, signing contracts and hours of preparing door prizes and decorations for the tables. After many phone calls fifty-one members and guests showed up

for a delicious meal. The table centers were beautiful, the surroundings grand, and everyone seemed to be having a good time. Thanks Anita and Lorraine for doing a great job.

Just a reminder that Homebrew Night is fast approaching on May 20th and Field Day is on June 27th and 28th.

If weather conditions are bad for January's meeting, an announcement will be made on VE3NCF. See you all on Wednesday, January 21st for the next meeting.

Ready To Use A Commemorative Prefix?

The following is a bulletin from RAC.

The International Year of Astronomy Special Prefix Callsign starts January 1st 0h UT and ends Feb 27th 23:59 UT 2009. All Canadian Amateurs are encouraged to use it to commemorate Galileo Galilei's first look through an optical instrument towards the heavens.

The Special Prefixes are
 VE changes to CG
 VA changes to CF
 VO changes to CH
 VY changes to CI

The official kickoff date for IYA is January 10th and on that date many astronomy clubs across Canada and around the world will be participating

Club meetings – 3rd Wednesday each month – 7:30 pm (except July and August) at Hamilton District Christian High School, 92 Glanaster Road, Ancaster, L9G 3K9, corner of Rymal Road (Hwy. #53) and Glanaster Road. Parking on location. Complimentary refreshments.

in local astronomical activities. Displays at Shopping Malls, talks in Public Libraries, star parties for the public will be happening. I am also encouraging those amateur Radio operators who are affiliated with the RASC (Royal Astronomical Society of Canada) that might have local IRLP access to visit node 9005 the Vancouver Reflector on January 10th to join in the across Canada IYA Net.

To find out more about this unique ham radio Special prefix and related projects visit
<<http://www.hamiya2009.info>>

Malcolm Scrimger, VE7DAO

RAC Canada Winter Contest 2008

Reported by Rick Danby, VE3BK



As many of you know, our Canadian contest started on boxing day at 7 pm and went till 7 pm on the Saturday December 27, 2008, not always the most convenient time for all, but we ended up with a good turnout anyway. Next year should be better as they are moving it to December 19, 2009, so plan to attend if you can contest with us.

For operators this year, we had Dan VA3DJ, Rick VE3BK, Sherry VE3DCU, Fred VE3GCP, Mardy VE3QEE, Jack VE3WBT, and Vince VE6LK/VE3LKV. Visitors only were Tom VA3TVI, Kevin VE3WKG, Mark VE3RYI and his wife Laura. Everyone braved the water at the site. We ended up with flooding at the contest site, because of the big thaw.

The water was not too bad when Jack and I arrived on Friday afternoon, but soon rose as the thawing continued. It got worse as time went on, but then retreated quit a bit by the time we left on Saturday night. Needless to say, this did not put a damper on our contesting activities. (No pun intended! Ed.)

Results from this year are down from last year, mostly because our big CW gun, Steve, VE3OZO, could not make it because of family commitments, (to be expected this time of year,) but 80m shone as normal with 40m right behind it. The higher bands suffered somewhat, probably with the way the propagation is right now. Some of the newer operators are still getting used to calling CQ instead of search and pounce operating, but they did exceptionally well and had fun in the process.

I think we all had fun with this more relaxed contest, where we actually have time to chat to some of the participants. It was fun to find out what the weather was like in Newfoundland etc. I know I personally had a few good QSOs, not just the normal 59 ON of contesting. Two meters and six meters was in good hands this year with Jack VE3WBT trying out his new 746 as well as Sherry trying her hand at 20m and working some good DX. We thank her for her donations to the contest group. She is quick study, with her work at Field Day and has picked up contesting very quickly. Too bad band conditions were not better, we sort of ignored 10m and 15m, not really watching for openings. We did not run the DX cluster again, so we were not aware of any openings. This is where we could always use more help or additional stations, that could be used for monitoring the bands and working the higher bands if there is an opening. When conditions get better in this new cycle, we will definitely be able to use more stations.

It was great to have Mardy VE3QEE and Fred VE3GCP come out. Mardy came out on the Friday night to take some pictures and rode out with Fred (who is recovering from a recent surgery) on Saturday, even despite the rising water, to help us operate. Fred did a great job on the 40m station, getting a lot of contacts from the American Hams who like to help out with our Canadian Contest. Vince VE6LK was also a great help on all the bands, plus with getting us out of there at the end, so we did not

HARC 2008-2009 Executive

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have to walk through the water to load our vehicles.

The water did not affect any of our antennas, maybe made a better ground plane for us hi hi. We had another successful contest, water and all. Thanks to those that worked us and those that participated with us. Hope to see you all again next year.



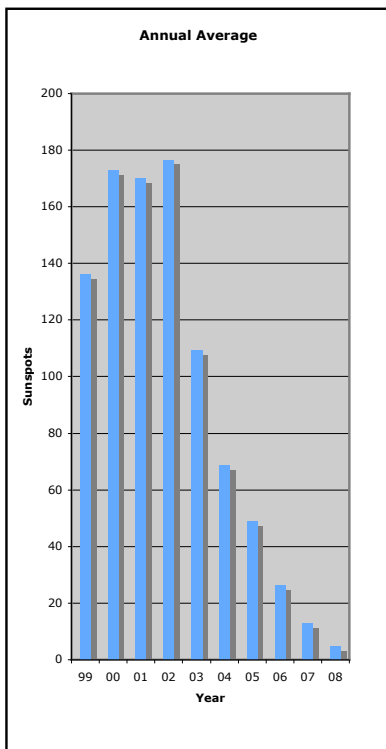
Looking For Sunspot Cycle 24

This report is from Tad Cook's, K7RA Weekly Propagation Bulletin for January 2nd, 2009 which is sent by e-mail to ARRL subscribers. Graphs were added by Mardy VE3QEE.

2008 was a year of very low solar activity. Over forty percent of this year's propagation bulletins reported zero sunspots for their respective weeks. The average daily sunspot number for the year was 4.7, and in 2007 it was 12.8.

The yearly averages of daily sunspot numbers for 1999-2008 were:

136.3, 173, 170.3, 176.6, 109.2, 68.6, 48.9, 26.1, 12.8 and 4.7.



Two years ago we wrote, "This is the first bulletin of 2007, the year we'll likely see the end of sunspot cycle 23, the beginning of cycle 24, and the minima between cycles".

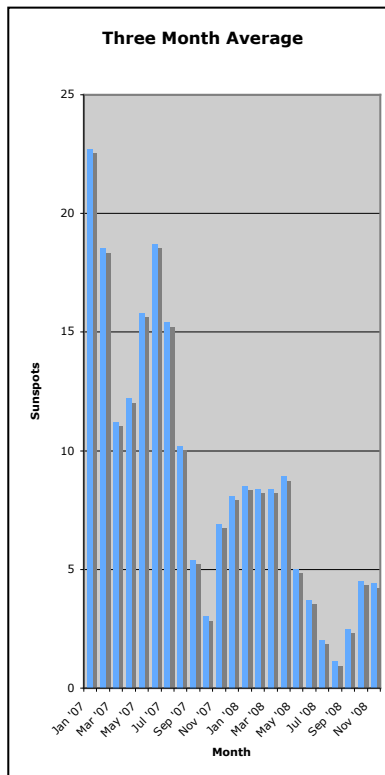
One year ago in the first bulletin of 2008 we noted the same quote from the previous year, and wrote "Now a

year later we might say the same about 2008".

This is probably still true for past year, because since early 2008 we saw cycle 24 spots, and what looks like a slow increase in activity toward the end of the year, although a week of sunspots at the end of December would have helped to sustain the upturn. We've been looking at a three month moving average of sunspot numbers, and the average for October-December, centered on November, was 4.4, about the same as the number 4.5 centered on October.

Here are the 3-month sunspot number averages since early 2007:

Jan 07 22.7 Feb 07 18.5
 Mar 07 11.2 Apr 07 12.2
 May 07 15.8 Jun 07 18.7 Jul 07 15.4
 Aug 07 10.2 Sep 07 5.4
 Oct 07 3.0 Nov 07 6.9 Dec 07 8.1
 Jan 08 8.5 Feb 08 8.4 Mar 08 8.4
 Apr 08 8.9 May 08 5.0 Jun 08 3.7
 Jul 08 2.0 Aug 08 1.1 Sep 08 2.5
 Oct 08 4.5 Nov 08 4.4



HARC 2006-2007 Chairs

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Currently an open position seeking volunteers.

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.....oOo.....

Forty Five Years of Fellowship

A tribute to Stan Bolibruch, VE3GFE~SK, by his longtime friend and colleague, Fred Robinson, VE3GCP

It was September of 1963 and I was walking into the first night school class for Amateur Radio. I was an eager beaver and headed for the front row aisle seat so I could be close to the teacher. As I moved to sit down I was bumped (literally) by a heavy set fellow.....I said "sorry" and went to sit down again and was bumped again. This time I looked up at the fellow and suddenly realized I had just had my first experience with a blind guy. It was awkward at first but we said hello and he asked if he could have the aisle seat. During the class it became apparent that much of what was being taught was lost on Stan. During the break I got better introduced to Stan Bolibruch who explained that he was legally blind but did have some "light-dark" perception. The thrust of the conversation became the fact that 75% of the stuff being taught required that it be put on the black board, which meant Stan did not have the benefit of most of the info needed to pass the exam. Stan's dad was there to pick him up and I got a ride home too. At the next class I realized that he would have no chance of getting his Ham Ticket with circumstances as they were so we devised a plan that Stan would make notes on his pocket braille and I would go to his house on Sunday mornings to re-teach the class to him. This was good for Stan and it tremendously helped me because it forced me to review the work in an orderly manner. What came as a bit of a surprise to me was the "comprehension gaps" that existed between me and him. A good example of this was when I said "a dipole antenna looks like the letter T and an inverted V antenna looks like an up-side-down letter V" to which Stan responded "what's a V look like?". This was the beginning of a tactile form of communicating that

we would develop over the following months. Instead of a black board we used a piece of pine with pins and wires in place of wires and connections. We couldn't use schematic symbols we used actual surplus components that I got from old TV sets. I learned about such things as the Perkins Braille and pocket braille and hand-in-hand image making.

The local DOC (Dept. of Communications now Industry Canada) radio inspector told me that there was no precedent for a modified Amateur License but he was willing to accommodate us to some degree. Consequently, when Stan took his test he answered the written test verbally, while the examiner read the questions to him. The questions were not multiple choice in those days. As for the basic transmitter, receiver, antenna and power supply circuits that had to be drawn from memorywell....let's just say that the examiner seemed pleasantly impressed with the "bread board" concept. Stan did the required code by simply stating the random characters as sent by the examiner on a simple code practice oscillator. I might mention that he had learned the code more quickly than most people and I realized that he was not listening to the dots and dashes, but rather to the complete sound. For example Stan did not listen to dash-dot-dot-dash-dot what he learned was the complete sounddahditditdahdit. He would later explain that listening to all those dots and dashes and then converting them was too complicated when you don't have the ability to write it down on paper. The DOC agreed that he could be granted a license on the basis that I would be responsible (sponsor) for the physical operation of the station, i.e. building, and maintenance. Stan became VE3GFE in 1975 and I had earlier been assigned VE3GCP..... we were happy.....very happy.

Both of us got very involved in the Hamilton ARC and in 1978 Stan was elected president of the club and many people were curious about what we had done. We did everything together including being on the

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 Wednesday following the club General Meeting each month. Ask an executive member for the location.

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.

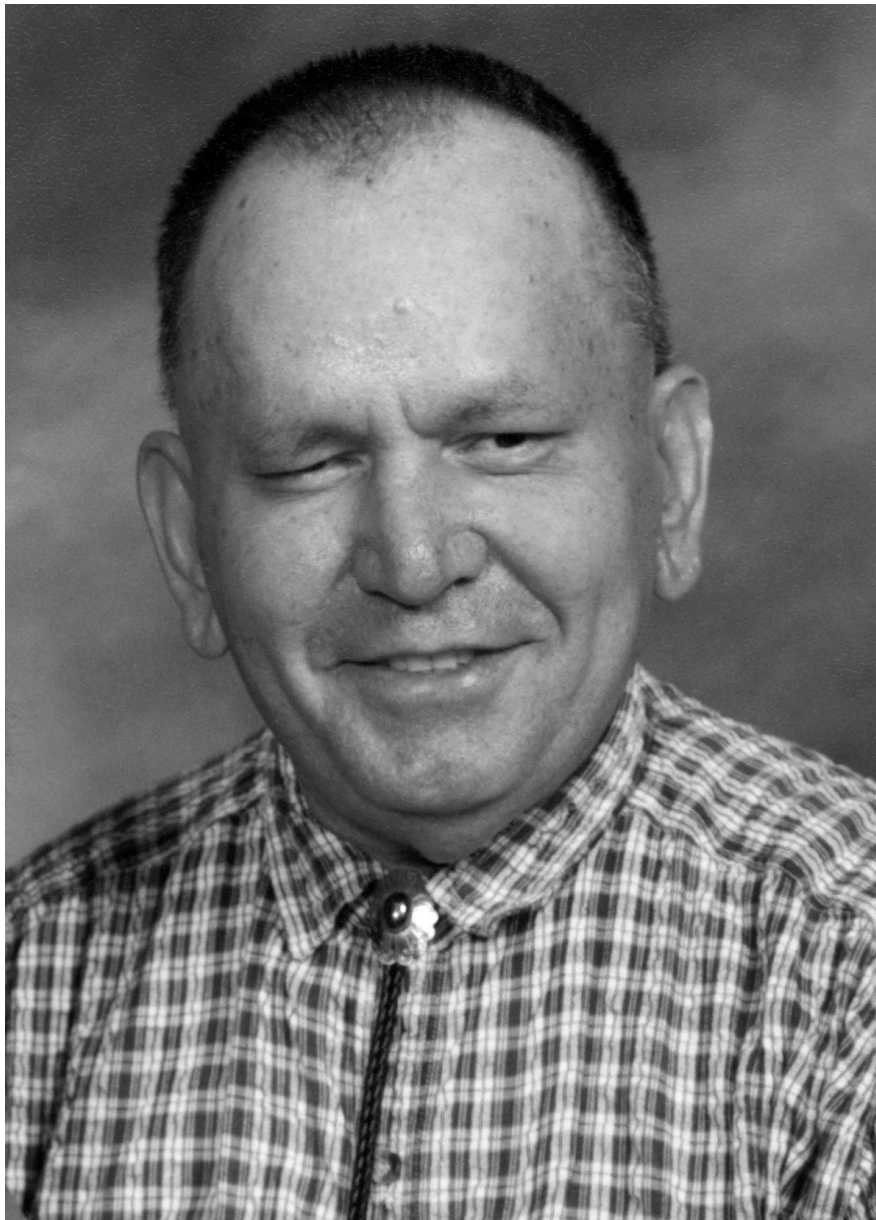
The Hamilton Amateur

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>

executive. I also got involved in the organization of the RSO (Radio Society of Ontario) and CARF which is now RAC, the Radio Amateurs of Canada. He would take calls "on the air" and telephone for me as I was married by then and there was much work to do. In 1974 the Hamilton ARC hosted the largest convention ever held by the RSO and Stan played a major role on the committee, keeping in touch with the guest speakers, the display people and 12 other committee members. During this period he became one of the most often heard and well known names on the 80 meter band. Everyday he was heard checking into the nets, most notably the ONTARS and CJ (chicken junction) nets. By this time the CNIB had

gotten interested in a program to assist blind operators and the Toronto people had started the CNIB-ARC. Many Amateurs became sponsors. To assist with the acquisition of equipment the Heath Company supplied the HW line of transceivers at cost and Northern Telecom supplied the materials to build the broad band coaxial dipoles. This gained national recognition to the degree that it became a New Horizon Grant recipient program. The WHITE CANE project was a success.

In Hamilton I was approached by Ernie Philpot who was the director



Stan Bolibruch VE3GFE

of the local CNIB. If you were in school prior to 1980 and remember a blind guy coming to talk about blind people that was likely Ernie. He was interested in having a class for White Caners at the CNIB. Well, we ended up with as many as 13 licensed Amateurs, including Ernie and many club members got involved as sponsors.

Through the 70s and 80s this hobby was in its hey-day and Field Day was a highlight. It was not unusual to have 5 or 6 stations and 30 people involved for the 24 hour event. Not

to be out-done we decided to make the 80 meter phone station a WC operation. We were joined by several WC operators and often John Kassay VE3FDK (sighted) who was an excellent phone operator would join in and it was common for us to finish at the top of the standings. Another of Stan's accomplishments was his ability to give traffic directions to Hams on 80 meters and the local repeater (VE3DRW pre VE3NCF). Stan was so accomplished at this that I can safely say that over the years there were hundreds of Hams that were assisted by Stan that never realized he was a White Caner. His ability to reliably store data about streets and locations, call signs, name and info about each person he spoke with was

unbelievable. He did not hesitate to you use this ability to assist his fellow Hams. A good example of this would be when he was asked to be the "talk-in" station for the Hamilton club's annual flea market. Over the years I had discussed this with Stan and it was clear to me that Amateur Radio meant so much to him that he was attempting to give back as much as it had given him. This hobby opened a lot of doors for many of us and in the case of a White Caner it is an additional way to communicate and meet other people. Stan was the recipient of several awards and

recognitions for his contribution to our hobby over the years.

Stan Bolibruch was not just an Amateur. Most of the Ham community was not aware of his activity as a member of the Knights of Columbus and the Holy Cross Church. When Stan was 12 years old he was diagnosed with a brain tumor. It was the life-saving operation to remove that tumor that left Stan blind and with partial paralysis of his right arm and leg. Even this did not dampen his enthusiasm and we he tackled almost every project we could come up with. His approach was not to be pre-occupied with his blindness but to do as much as he could. In more recent year he experienced some accidents and on three occasions suffered broken bones from falls at home. In late 2007 he was hospitalized and had a steel pin placed in his upper leg to repair his broken femur. Due to his inability to do the usual physio therapy Stan did not progress well and complications set-in. While being treated for an infection in his leg it was discovered that the condition that resulted in his blindness had returned. Stan moved to St. Peter's Hospital just one week before his 65th birthday on September 28, 2008. We had a nice party with a great many people including several members of the HARC. On the 12th of November, VE3GFE became a silent key.

I can recall many stories of our experiences but one of the most valid happened at a convention in the 60s when many TV shows were still in black and white and we had TV antennas. A group of sighted people were chatting with us. Stan was referring to something he had been watching on TV the night before and I noticed a puzzled look come over a lady's face. She awkwardly asked Stan if he meant "listening to the radio" and he said "no, I like the TV shows better". The lady became even more awkward but did manage to express her confusion about him not being able to see the picture on the screen. His reply was, "when I watch TV, the picture is always clear and

strong, the picture is in colour..... and all the girls are beautiful"

73 StanTNX

VHF Contest January 17th to 19th, 2009

Here's a contest in which you can participate from home.

The Rochester VHF Group is sponsoring a new and hopefully annual local area contest on VHF and UHF bands. They want to involve local amateurs in Canada and USA in a VHF/UHF simplex contest running concurrently with the ARRL January 17th - 19th VHF QSO Party.

See the Rochester web site: <http://www.rvhfg.org/challenge.pdf> for a summary of the local contest rules, scoring and awards. See the ARRL web site for QSO party rules <http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2009/jan-vhf-ss.html>

Etymology Of The Term HAM Radio

Checking to see what Wikipedia has to report about the origin of the term HAM Radio.

I have seen several stories about how the term HAM came to be associated with Amateur Radio. When another of these stories was submitted for publication in the newsletter I had a look at Wikipedia to see what light that encyclopedia might cast on the subject.

According to Wikipedia, there are several "false etymologies" describing how the term HAM came to be. One of those stories, that of "A Little Station Called HAM" was published in our own newsletter, THA, Volume 71, #7, March 2004. Apparently, none of the facts claimed in the story were true, about Albert S. Hyman, Bob Almy and Poogie Murray appealing to

US Congress on behalf of amateur operators.

In another story, "Home Amateur Mechanic Magazine", was reputed to have published plans for a radio station you could build and use to talk to other similar stations. However, there is no evidence that this magazine ever existed.

There are two other stories referred to in Wikipedia which I had never heard, that were equally discredited.

The most plausible explanation seems to be that the term, ham, originated as a term of derision applied by professional telegraph operators to radio amateurs who used morse code with less skill. The term was eventually picked up by radio amateurs and used proudly to refer to themselves and their hobby.

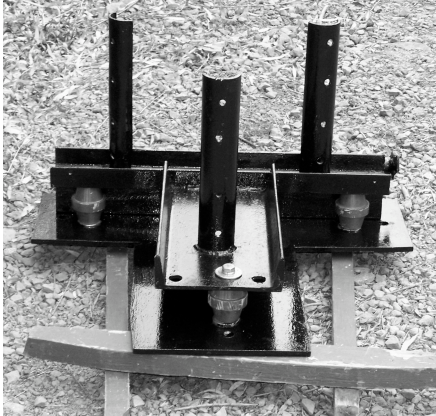
So, that's how Wikipedia sees it. I am quite happy being called a HAM regardless of how the term came into being.

Crank up Tilt up Tower Progress

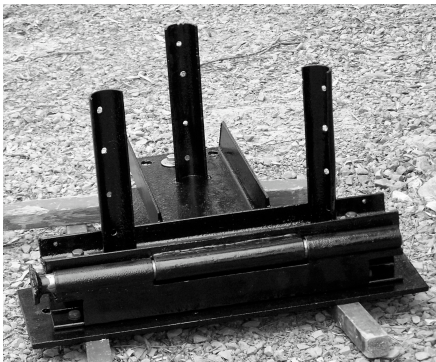
by Rick Danby VE3BK

This project is taking a bit of time, but it is really coming together and will be done right, so it will be a great antenna for the contest site. Thanks is due to many people: to Mark VE3RYI for the hinge design and making the base plate (nice heavy duty job), to Dan VA3DJ for painting the base and helping his Dad with the welding, to his Dad for welding the hinge together, to Sherry VE3DCU for using her trailer to move the tower, and to everyone involved in getting it originally (too many people to mention), not to mention all the time Jim VE3EEZ has spent with drill bits etc. This project has been just one big team effort so far. We have been doing some prep work to get it ready for the actual raising of the tower, Dan VA3DJ, David VE3DWJ, Jack VE3WBT and myself. The extra work is due to the new hardware that

went into the project. Mark VE3RY1 is looking at a way to use aluminum lamp standard poles to mount at the top instead of the heavy steel ones that the tower had at its last location.. This will make the top lighter in the wind and weather. Now we are just waiting for colder weather to arrive so that we don't have to slog around in the mud. Plus, everyone knows that antennas work better when you put them up in the cold weather. Hi hi. Everything



The hinge in the top picture tilts away, and in the bottom picture tilts towards the viewer.



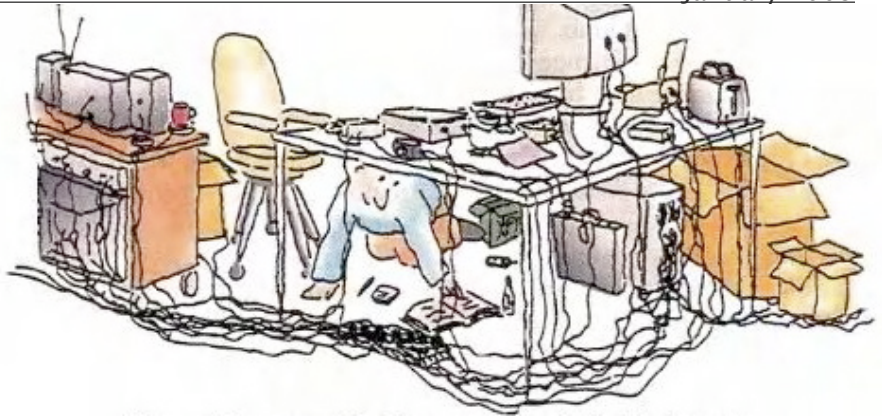
should be done soon.

These are pictures of our new heavy duty hinge.

News About Town

by Mardy Eedson VE3EE

Over the Christmas season I had computer problems which eventually resulted in having to wipe clean two computers. The Macintosh computer, on which this newsletter is produced developed a software problem and kept shutting down. After spending



"Now, if you can find the power switch flip it on."

the morning with tech services at the Apple Store we finally resorted to taking ultimate step of reformatting the hard drive and fixing problem. Then, the ancient IBM ThinkPad laptop I use for HAM radio lost its driver for the Ethernet port. After repeatedly trying to install a new driver, we resorted to using the Windows system recovery disk to restore Windows 2000. That solved the problem, but reformatted the hard drive I am sure many of you have been in the same situation, probably more than once.

I am passing along a couple of recent announcements.

QSL.net & QTH.net Announcement

appearing on <<http://www.qsl.net/>> December 31, 2008

Dear fellow hams: after 13 years of providing hams with no cost web space, e-mail forwarding and mailing list services through QSL.net and QTH.net, I have decided to retire. All QSL.net and QTH.net servers and Internet connections at my home QTH are being turned down.

Scott KA9FOX has graciously decided to pick up where I left off, and he is in the process of migrating all services to new hardware. See below for an update on the status of the migration.

want to thank all of you for all of your support over the years, and I hope that you will support Scott as he takes over the reigns..

See you on the air! 73 - Al Waller, K3TKJ (For an update on the migration of services, check out the <[qsl.net](http://www.qsl.net/)> website.)

Canadian Station CHU Changing Frequency

On January 1, 2009 at 00:00 UTC, CHU will be moving it's 41 metre time broadcast from 7335 Khz to 7850 Khz as a result of the 2007 WRC which relocated the band 7300-7350 Khz from Fixed services to Broadcasting. As a result of the increased interference, the National Research Council (NRC) decided to change frequency at the same time a refurbished transmitter will be installed.

Radio Station CHU is Canada's Time and Frequency Radio Station which is run by the National Research Council of Canada. CHU signals are transmitted on 3.330, 7.850 [new] and 14.670 MHz. For more information about the station, a web site for CHU is found at <geocities.com/radiojunkie3/chu.html>

I was talking with John Hudak, VE3CXB, on air the other day, and he mentioned a neat demonstration on the internet. John sent a web address for the video showing a man manufacturing a triode tube by hand. It is quite a process and well worth watching. The web address for this video clip is: <http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x3wrzo_fabrication-dune-lampe-triode_tech>



Christmas Party at the Warplane Heritage Museum

