



Hamilton Amateur Radio Club,
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Est. 1932 Inc. 1956
<http://www.hamiltonarc.ca/>

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The Hamilton Amateur

The Hamilton Amateur Radio Club Newsletter ~ 83 Years of Amateur Radio 1932-2015

The Next Meeting

— one week early —

The next meeting takes place on Wednesday, March 11th at 7:00 P.M. in the Cafeteria of Westdale Secondary School (Main West at Longwood). **Because of the March Break. Westdale School will be closed on our normal meeting date so our meeting has been moved ahead one week.**

New Local Repeater for DMR Coms.

by Greg Gignac
VE3YGG.



A brand new repeater has landed on the CHCH tower, It is known as VE3UHM DMR (not to be confused with the existing analog repeater VE3UHM.) Gary VE3TTO mentioned this at one of our monthly meetings.

DMR, short for Digital Mobile Radio, is the *open source* digital mode. Many manufacturers are beginning to make DMR radios. Unlike D-Star radios which use proprietary software marketed exclusively by Icom, the DMR

radios will be available from multiple manufacturers and should be less expensive. An American designed DMR portable radio is coming out in a month or two, and the manufacturers claim it will (eventually) run DMR, P25, analog FM, D-Star and Fusion (Yaesu) and will sell for the introductory price of \$249USD. Check out the CS7000 portable at [\[http://www.connectsystems.com\]](http://www.connectsystems.com)

DMR has built in talk 'groups.' These are similar to IRLP reflectors. You just select the group you want to talk to (local, provincial, North America, Europe English, etc) and you reach all the connected DMR repeaters in that area/group.

Read all about the recent repeater installation at the CHCH tower at the URL:

[\[http://www.va3xpr.net/ve3uhm-dmr-debuts-in-the-gta/\]](http://www.va3xpr.net/ve3uhm-dmr-debuts-in-the-gta/)

Here is a link to the presentation about DMR that was given at the Barrie club last month. It was given by Richard VE3SQT. He has run a DMR repeater in the Barrie area for about a year, and he is the trustee for the new DMR repeaters in Collingwood and Orillia.

Club meetings – 3rd Wednesday each month – 7:00 pm (except July and August) in the cafeteria of Westdale Secondary School, 700 Main Street West, Hamilton. Wheelchair accessible. Parking in the back. Use the rear entrance closest to Longwood Road. Visitors welcome. Complimentary refreshments.

The presentation is found at:
[\[http://www.va3xpr.net/?ddownload=4127\]](http://www.va3xpr.net/?ddownload=4127)

Here is a link to the official DMR website:

[\[http://www.dmr-marc.net/\]](http://www.dmr-marc.net/)

Look for a document titled "Amateur Radio Guide to Digital Mobile Radio (DMR)" This document gives a good introduction to the new technology.

Thanks Greg for telling us about Digital Mobile Radio. I hope our readers will check out the four web addresses you have provided and learn about the latest DMR technology. Ed.

Vice President's Message

by Paul Fleck VE3HTF

Hello, and welcome to another edition of our newsletter. Well, 2015 is looking like it will be a banner year of activity for our club and its members.



On the business side of the club, the S.W.O.T analysis that has been completed has provided your executive with a detailed list of opportunities our members would like addressed and planned for, in our clubs business plan. I would like to thank all those who have contributed their time and effort in gathering and documenting their findings. Great effort! Now our job is to identify the steps to take that will give those ideas and suggestions actionable goals. The end result will be a business plan for our club that will guide us in the

development, growth and better services for you....our members.

On the community and social scene, we have completed and finalized the planning of a Tri-Club social event. The event is this region's largest social gathering of like-minded amateur radio hobbyists!

The event is called "*The Brass Pounders and Wave Riders*" dinner. It is scheduled to take place on Tuesday April 14th.

The three clubs participating are the Guelph Amateur Radio Club, The Burlington Amateur Radio Club and the Hamilton Amateur Radio Club!

The dinner will be a fixed price buffet and starts with a social at 06:00 p.m. with dinner commencing at 06:30 p.m.

Seating is limited and tickets will become available for the March General Meeting. Pricing and the final menu will be finalized before the next meeting.

Planning is on going to ensure we have a great social night engaging in conversation and kibitzing!

I must make mention of our Tech Night leader, Ron (VE3RTJ) as he has been able to organize meaningful technical sessions that have given all participants lots to think about and many times leaving us with more questions than answers!!! A great learning opportunity...thanks Ron.

Be sure to check into our Friday night nets on the VE3NCF repeater. Ahmet (VA3TUR) is doing a wonderful job of rounding up the check-ins and managing club announcements. The net is

getting busier all the time with check-ins and enquiries! Nice job Ahmet, thank-you...

73's for now, stay warm...

Paul, VE3HTF



HARC member Barney Bethel VA3BSO a recent graduate of the Basic Course, works aboard this Canadian Coast Guard ice breaker on the Great Lakes. He sends this picture of his home away from home.

HARC 2014-2015 Executive

President

Roger Pimm VE3UFZ
 ve3ufz@hamiltonarc.ca

Past President

Mike Krebs
 va3wxs@hamiltonarc.ca

First Vice President

Paul Fleck VE3HTF
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David Bruton VE3DWJ
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Ron Pereira VE3RTJ
 ve3rtj@hamiltonarc.ca

Minutes for the February 18th Meeting

by Mardy Eedson VE3QEE, filling in for Secretary Jim Sawadski, VE3JS.

It was snowy, cold and windy the night of February 18th, but despite the storm 23 people arrived to hear John Hudak's presentation on The Very Low Frequency Band.

Attendance was taken visually and recorded on a Voice-It.

With so many people assembled, the decision was made to proceed with the meeting but cut short the business section so all could have more time afterward to return home safely.

Announcements were made about the upcoming 160 meter contest, and several other matters then John was introduced.

John used a 73 frame Power Point format to demonstrate the activity taking place in each area of the spectrum, and played for us recorded signals typical of each station and event. The presentation was organized by frequency and lots of slides showed the actual stations and antennas where signals originate. We saw photos of the antenna arrays for VLF communication, some stretching for many kilometers over the landscape. John also showed the type of equipment typically used by those investigating signals in this band. Thank you John, for a comprehensive introduction to VLF activity. In the words of Mark Gibson,

"The presentation was really interesting".

Refreshments followed, augmented by Ginette's shortbread treats and good conversation. Adjournment took place at 8:20 P.M.

Builders' Corner

by Mardy Eedson, VE3QEE



It annoys me when an appliance comes with no method to manage the power cord. Here is a solution I have found to be helpful. Inexpensive packages of Badge ID clips are now available in places like Staples and Walmart.

If you remove the plastic tab from one of the clips and then screw the clip directly to the appliance, the clip can now be used to secure the end of the power cord when the appliance is not in use. If you fear the clip might cut into

the power cord simply wrap the cord with a piece of electrical tape for greater protection.

Reaching Out

by Greg Gignac, VE3YGG

Note: Greg has been using amateur radio to contact other Hamiltons around the world. Ed.

I joined in on the Hamilton Bermuda VHF net tonight. I was in Mississauga, so I used Echolink. (VP9RSB-R IRLP #8522)

They take a list of check ins, then go around twice. Then they do announcements, then any other business.'

Next they ask if anyone has anything for the swap shop, and then announce what QSL cards have come in.

At the end of the net they do a bit of a weather report for the week. Like us, they are upset with

In the photo below, a Badge ID Clip has been bolted to the battery charger at a location where the end of the power cord rests, thereby securing the coiled cord for storage.



winter and they have a lot of outside projects on hold because their temperature is averaging only 64 degrees Fahrenheit these days, although it will be 71 on Wednesday. It will be going down to 59 degrees at night.

I mentioned our temperatures for comparison, and told them I would email them some newsletters and was told to go to the website at www.vp9ge.com. I told them in the future I'd try to connect from our repeater and other Hamiltonians might join in. I sent the vp9ge link to our website.

Check-ins included:
 VP9KD - Walter - Net Control
 VP9NLN - Miriam
 VP9NI - John, (originally from Oakville VE3KXX)
 VP9GE - Ed
 VP9AD - Allan
 KB???/VP9 - ??
 VP9NNJ - Manuel
 VP9NL - Craig
 VP9ID - Glen (could not hear him)
 VE3YGG - me

One more Hamilton for the pot.

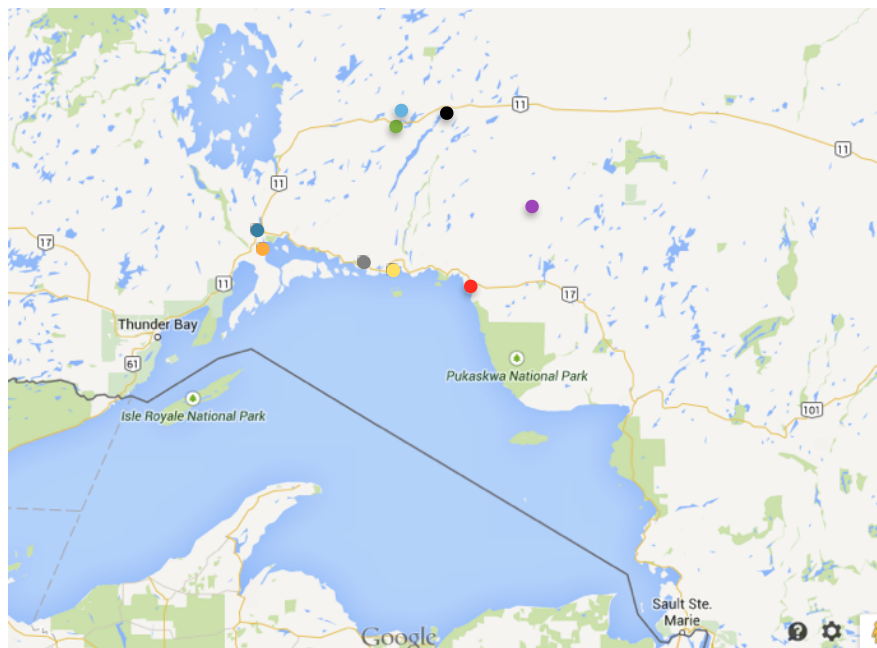
My Northern Excursion

by Jack Gauthier,
 VE3WBT



Some of you may recall that I was offered a lucrative position in the North Western part of Ontario several months ago. My position was to manage nine elementary schools starting in Marathon (●) east to Manatouage (●) then west to Terrace Bay, (●) Schreiber, (●) Nipigon, (●) Red Rock, (●) and then further north to Longlac, (●) Nikina, (●) and Geraldton. (●) I thought at that time this would be a good move for my wife and myself, as we move closer to the grand children, not too close as this would make us babysitters, but close enough so they could visit.

Once I arrived, I sought out a place to live. This turned out to be somewhat of a challenge, as places are difficult to come across. I found temporary



HARC Chairs 2014 – 2015

Health / Welfare
 Tom Feeney VE3KTP

Contesting / Property Manager
 Rick Danby VE3BK

Membership
 Sherry Goeller VE3DCU

Education
 Mardy Eedson VE3QEE

Newsletter
 Mardy Eedson VE3QEE

Examiner Volunteers
 Mike Christmas VE3XMS
 Paul Fleck VE3HTF
 Roger Pimm VE3UFZ

Repeater Admin. / QSL Manager
 Rick Danby VE3BK

Repeater Technician
 John Vandenberg VE3DVV

EQSL Manager
 (VE3DC & VA3CWM)
 Don Grisenthwait VE3DDQ

Field Day Coordinator
 Ginette Pereira VA3SEW

Tuesday 2m Check-in Net
 Controller
 Mike Krebs VA3WXS

Flea market Coordinator
 Paul Fleck VE3HTF

Public Relations/Communication
 Ron Pereira VE3RTJ

Flea market Vendor Contact
 Mardy Eedson VE3QEE

Webmaster
 Jim Sawadski VE3EEZ

accommodation in an apartment building for \$800.00 fully furnished with heat and telephone, internet (high speed). Well after paying \$1,600. For the place, I found that what they call high speed in Schreiber is more like 9600bps. So back to the search and pounce for accommodations. I found a home for sale, beautiful 2000 square ft., and oil furnace with property. The sale price was \$110,000. Sounds great I say to myself. After speaking with the owner, I find out she is an OPP officer being transferred to southern Ontario. Well this is turning out better than I thought, you see, if an officer cannot sell their home after they transfer then the OPP will pick it up and sell it for \$90,000. My my, this is a win win situation for me. Well we talk and settle on terms and such, and when it comes time to sign off, well the terms change dramatically, so back to the search. Found another, 2800 sq. ft., little too big for the XL and I but only house available. So, the owner and I chat, I move in Dec 05. Between travelling to work each day and getting squared away in the new digs, I was very busy. But I needed to get an antenna in the air before end of month as I was to be on ONTARS Sunday afternoons.

Christmas day, I scoped out my landscape for the antenna, unfortunately I did not have the immediate space for an 80 meter, so I tossed up a 40 meter OCF. Tested the SWR and made a couple of contacts in the western part of Canada, as well as mid-west United States. I was good to go, at least I thought. Gave Rick VE3BK a quick Skype call and we got on the air. Rick and I tested

40; 20; 10; 15, but it seemed the best band for me was 20 meters. We chatted a bit, and said our 73's. Back to work.

During my stay in the North I sought out other hams in the area. I found two in the vicinity, of the two, I paid one a visit every day for two weeks and yet he was not at home, so no luck there. The other lives on an island and commutes in winter by snow machine, summer by boat. It turned out that my neighbor was this chap's son. VA3AAA did pay a visit to my home, unfortunately for me I was fast asleep and missed his call.

My ability to get back on ONTARS did not come to fruition, and speaking with the H.A.R.C. gang was not possible on 80 meters. Mind you my reception of John VE3DVV and Mark VE3MWH was a clear 8-9, Marty was in my mud, and Rick VE3BK was an 8. But I could not make contact no matter how much I tuned the darn thing. So, we are HAM's, we overcome the obstacles. I called Rick VE3BK on the phone and said "could you guys move to 20", they happily did. Let me state here, that hearing the gang on air was so uplifting for me that I forgot the troubles I had and continued to have in the North. Radio communication was at a standstill for the time being as winter was settling in and I had no time to work on antenna raising. So, I put my mind to work, "what Ham project" could I get involved in to pass the limited amount of time I had? I thought of many, but the costs of material was very high. I settled for a Rotator Controller for my tower, of which I'm continuing today, and hope to have ready for Homebrew.

Important Points

Executive Meetings

HARC Executive committee meets each month, except July and August. Members are invited to attend. Time and location of the meetings vary but they are posted on the web site at <hamiltonarc.ca>

VE3NCF 146.760 - & 444.075 + using tone 131.8

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 Friday evening at 7:30 p.m. on VE3NCF (see above) September through June. An informal HF net takes place Mondays at 7:30 PM on 3.693 MHz. All contacts are welcome.

Examinations

Amateur radio license examinations are conducted by arrangement with our three designated examiners. Refer to the web site at <hamiltonarc.ca> for details.

Membership Information

Club membership, including all privileges, is \$31 per person, per year, Sept 1 to Aug 31. Additional membership, for immediate family living in the same home, is offered. Refer to the web site at <hamiltonarc.ca> for details.

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, Marty Eedson, VE3QEE, <ve3qee@hamiltonarc.ca>.

Shoveling snow four times a day to clear the double car driveway was a chore. I would get up at four in the morning shovel the damn thing then at seven, after work I would have to shovel again at five then at eight before I went to bed. I would wake up in the morning with cold feet and go to bed cold, I hate the cold, but it was a sacrifice I was willing to make for my wife so she could be closer to the kids and grandchildren.

I did learn a few things up there, like how to start a pellet wood stove. This little bit of technology is fairly new, and I grew up with the old fashion type of wood stove but nothing like this. I didn't have a clue! So, knock knock knock on a neighbor's door asking if they could assist was not a big deal. The stove has an auger inside that feeds the stove pellets, and there is an igniter in the bottom of the stove, if the igniter fails you squirt a little lighter fluid on it and away she goes. My monthly heating bills consisted of \$700.00 for propane, \$485.00 for wood pellets, electricity was comparable to your monthly bills down here approx. \$200.00. My telephone was a Magic Jack and internet at 25 down 3 up was \$125.00.

My vehicle was the only blessing I had while I was up there, a Dodge RAM 1500 eco diesel, I leased this truck prior to the move up there as I thought that a truck was a need. Boy ol boy was I wrong, I am impressed with the people that manage the roads up there. Clean is an understatement, if the OPP closes the highway at let's say six o'clock, then by seven in the am, they are open and clean.

Well after three months of living in the north western part of

Ontario, I needed to make decisions, is this the right move for us. After adding up the costs and expenses, plus the added costs of moving, the decision was made for me to return to the warmth of Dundas, and the comradery of my friends in H.A.R.C.

Jack, VE3WBT, is back and was at the February HARC meeting at Westdale. Good to have you home again. Ed.

Ham Radio Deluxe / DM-780 / FLdigi

by Paul Fleck VE3HTF



Confused? I certainly was and so our latest "Tech Night" subject was about the differences and functionality of FLdigi and Ham Radio Deluxe – DM-780

I do not profess to know the workings of either product suffice to say that both offer the "budding" digital operator a plethora of choices. The setup, number of modes and services available and tools available to any operator will keep one busy for a very long time.

This evening we listened in on the "Michigan Digital Traffic Net" on 80 meters. Our first attempt had us scratching our heads. My ICOM 7600 and newly acquired HRD did not want to play nicely in the sand box and we had some

configuration issues. Ron (VE3RTJ) was able to tweak some parameters and Bazinga! We had operational control of the ICOM 7600 via HRD.

Our second challenge was that we could see the "Michigan Digital Traffic Net" utilizing the mode Olivia 8 on the waterfall AND the Video ID but it was backwards! Video I.D. is the ability to send an I.D. string which can be read in the waterfall display! Many thanks to Dave Freese –WiHKJ for the original design and coding in FLdigi!!

Well, we found the issue to be that we were attempting to decode or read a digital signal that was being transmitted USB and the system was setup for LSB. DM-780 will not decode the audio into text, and the Video I.D. imbedded in the waterfall display will be backwards! Once we switched modes to the correct SSB setting, we were able to watch several QSO's.

The differences that I came to understand between the two services is that the FLdigi (Fast Light digital) is a somewhat easier to use "Digital" interface that meets the needs of most users, without the added layers of other program services that are combined in programs like DXlab & H.R.D.. These other heavy weights are just that, a collection of multiple services that bring many other options to the operator, from satellite tracking to logbooks and antenna rotor control.

FLdigi, does "Digital" that's it, that's all. So for EMCOM use, VHF / UHF digital, FLdigi is well suited.

The continued exploration into the "Digital World" in ham radio has just started for some of us, and it looks like a long and enjoyable journey ahead!

If you are interested in this venue of amateur communications, drop in to one of our "Tech Night" meetings, held every Thursday at Westdale School, room 124 at 7:30 p.m.

73,
Paul, VE3HTF



Ron, (VE3RTJ) looking at a second screen and tweaking the DM-780 to improve performance and readability.

Great to have an expert at the controls!



Meanwhile...Greg, VE3YGG, our observant LINUX man was pinching some pecan tarts!!

However, Ron was able to rescue the remaining tarts for the trip home!

What Do Hams Do?

This question was reportedly asked by one of our graduates from the recent Basic course.

There are many answers to this question. My favourite answer is this. There are as many branches of Amateur Radio as there are Radio Amateurs, meaning that each radio amateur essentially does his or her own thing. The shortest answer to the question might be this. Learn. Because everything you do in Amateur Radio involves learning, either learning by doing, or learning by reading, or learning by watching experienced hams and by asking questions.

One thing is guaranteed, as you get into the hobby your interests will grow and change. What you do at the beginning will only be a step along the way. But not to digress from the original question, here are some of the broad interest areas that hams tend to follow.

Contesting. Our club has a Contest Group and a tradition of participating in a number of contests throughout the year. The club call, VE3DC, is widely known among contesters and records in such publications as QST will show that we place well among Canadian clubs in the contests we enter. You can contest individually from home and you can participate to win, or just to have fun and be part of the activity. If you want to be a contester there is a contest almost every weekend and even sometimes during the week. Just grab the mic and go for it!

Nets. Another area of involvement is participating in Nets. A net is simply a group of hams that get together regularly at an established time and frequency to talk to one another following a set of procedures upon which they agree. There are nets every day of the week and for many purposes. To be on a net you check in regularly with the result that others on the net get to know you. Its like joining a

community. You can become one of the net controllers and run the net on a regular basis. I have participated in nets from time to time and even acted as net controller. It teaches you how to handle traffic on a routine and efficient basis, as well as making friends on the air, which you may meet, face-to-face at a flea market or similar gathering.

DX. The letters DX refer to long distance communication. A number of radio amateurs chase long distance contacts. They embark on a journey to collect as many countries as they can. You prove a contact by exchanging QSL cards or some equivalent form like entries in Logbook Of The World, an electronic record of your contacts. Once you have completed a set of contacts you can apply for an award, like the Worked All States Award. It's just another branch of the hobby.

Special Events. Collecting special event certificates is another activity in which hams engage. There re all kinds of special

events created by local hams to commemorate something important to them. Recently we sponsored a War of 1812 special event, and gave out a certificate to hams that contacted us and applied for the certificate. When the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum had its 40th anniversary the radio room crew created a certificate and operated for a whole year offering the certificate and a unique QSL card to anyone who contacted us and applied for the certificate. Its a way of remembering and celebrating what is unique about the local area via amateur radio.

Emergency Preparedness. An important aspect of amateur radio is the ability of radio amateurs to respond in times of emergency providing communication when conventional systems fail. Effective communication does not happen spontaneously. To be ready for handling emergency situations, amateurs participate in emergency preparedness groups like ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Service), and CANWARN (a severe weather observing and reporting system) through which they undergo training and rehearsal sessions in order to be effectively prepared for responding should the need arise.

Even our annual Field Day is an emergency preparedness event through which ordinary and casually involved hams learn how to set up a station in a field, using emergency power, and communicate over a 24 hour period with other hams doing the same thing. Field Day is effective training.

Repeaters. Using only handheld transceivers and local repeaters on the VHF and UHF bands, hams can establish communication virtually all over the world. All it takes is a little experience using repeaters and knowledge about how to operate systems like IRLP and similar protocols (Internet Radio Linking Project), to connect with, open and close, remote repeaters which can be linked into the system at any given time. It is a branch of the hobby which requires only simple equipment and time.

QRP. The letters QRP, originally stood for the Q-code asking the question, Shall I reduce my power? Now the letters QRP have become associated with Low Power operation. Simple radios, often CW only, or using both CW and Phone, and operating typically with 5 watts or less, form a special branch of the hobby. It is easy to build a QRP rig from a kit. Such equipment is much less expensive to acquire and use. QRP groups get together to facilitate QRP operation, and special areas of the HF bands are reserved for QRP operators. It is a real challenge and a satisfying accomplishment to make contact using QRP equipment. Achievement is sometimes measured in miles per watt for a contact with someone far away. Every area of the continent has a QRP club and monthly or quarterly publications devoted to this aspect of Amateur Radio.

Building. The tradition of building your own equipment was very strong in the early days of amateur radio. Today you can purchase equipment quite easily so building is not as essential as it used to be. However, there are a great many opportunities, still, for

radio amateurs to build equipment from transceivers, to test equipment, interfaces to antennas, and this branch of the hobby has its proponents.

Digital. As computers become more pervasive in our society, amateur radio has begun to employ computers to a corresponding degree. One area where computers have been employed is that of the digital modes. Operators who specialize in such modes as Packet Radio, Radio Teletype, PSK-31, Hellschreiber, Facter, and JT63, communicate, not with voice, but by typing on the screen. The signals are transmitted by radio but the input and output devices are often keyboards and monitors.

The foregoing list of things hams do has not been an exhaustive one. I could have mentioned Moon Bounce also known as EME, or Meteor Scatter, or Microwave Communication, which are other areas of specialization. Most hams have tried a variety of activities, before settling for a time on one type of operation of another. Generally you begin somewhere, and go where your interests take you. I tended to become involved where I felt welcomed by other hams, and drifted away from areas where the hams acted like jerks.

The most enjoyable part of the hobby for me has been the people you meet, the stimulation of learning something new, the joy succeeding at a task and sharing those feelings with others. Amateur radio is a group undertaking and without the participation of others there can be no joy. Stay involved. Treat others as you would like to be treated. Take delight in the little things. It is a good hobby.