

NARA Newsletter



President's Message – Randy VE7FAA

Welcome to the NARA Newsletter for May 2022.

Much has happened since the NARA clubhouse was destroyed by fire on March 17, and much continues to happen. The executive has been having discussions about relocation efforts, and an in-person meeting is being considered for June at a central Nanaimo location. Once that is confirmed members will be provided details. Discussions with the city are also expected.

While much equipment removed from the clubhouse has been sold, first to members and then at the Merville swap meet several weeks ago earning the club some cash, the rest is stored at various locations. Great thanks to all those who have assisted in this large undertaking. But it may take some time before Nanaimo amateurs can have a new place to store gear, have a station, and work together on projects.

You will also notice a new club logo on this newsletter. The redesign is in part to go with the new NARA community services section. Our club is in a unique position to provide communications for any number of community or sporting events. As we make our volunteer services available at various events, more details will be released along with information on how you can participate. Your involvement will be key to this initiative.

Just because we no longer have a clubhouse does not mean NARA is inactive. In fact, the club is more active than ever. There will be a foxhunt on May 21 (1pm), Field Day at the end of June, tech talks continue, courses are planned, and a summer picnic is being considered. So join us when you can. Since NARA belongs to you, the members, it also belongs to the wider community.

Maple Ridge ARC Swap Meet

The Maple Ridge Amateur Radio Club swap meet is back on Sunday, May 1st. Numerous prizes will be given away. Dealers will be on hand, plus educational presentations, and a pancake and sausage breakfast will be available.

The location is **Pitt Meadows, Heritage Hall, 12460 Harris Road**. Doors open to the public at 10 am. Entry charge is \$10.

10m FM repeater

Ward VE7CYA reports that he is having a lot of fun using the VE3MMX 10m repeater in Shedden, Ont. This FM repeater transmits on 29.640 MHz. To use it you transmit 100 KHz minus; no tone is required. Ward reports that the repeater is full quieting into Nanaimo.

UK Amateurs Exploring 40 MHz

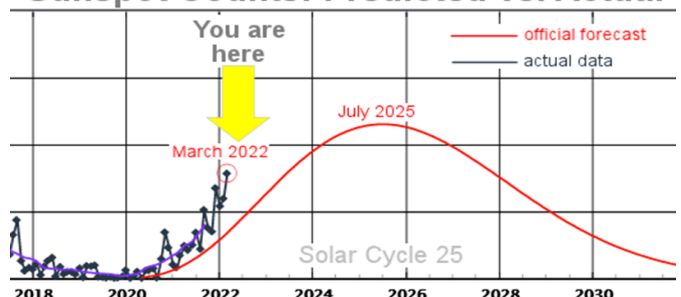
The United Kingdom licensing authority, Ofcom, has granted temporary Innovation and Research licenses to several UK amateurs to transmit in the 40 MHz band.

G3XBM, in the east of England, has already started transmitting and has a licence until April 2023. This special licence is for 40 to 42 MHz with digital modes and CW, at 5 watts ERP maximum. G3XBM expects to be mostly on FT8 around 40.676 MHz with a precise frequency used in liaison with others. He expects that his 5 watts should certainly cover Europe when sporadic E is in play.

How is DX – David VA7DXX

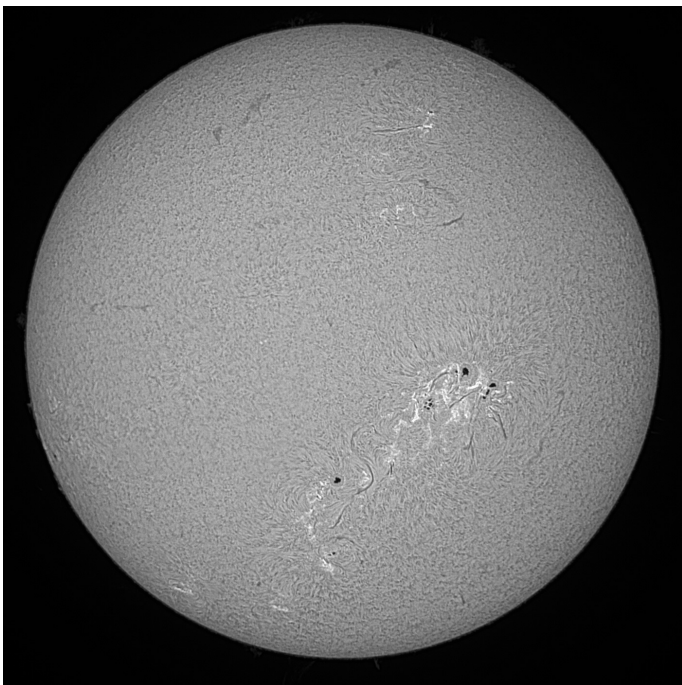
As HF operators know we are presently in sunspot cycle 25, which is forecast to peak in July 2025. As you can see from the diagram below (thanks to Space Weather) the sunspot counts are well ahead of the predictions so far. I am not exactly sure of the vertical scale, but as of March 2022 it does look as if we are doing well.

Sunspot Counts: Predicted vs. Actual



Then on April 19 there was news of an X2.1 flare from the southwest limb of the sun. It was the largest flare so far this cycle (i.e., since January 2020). The last time there was a flare this large was in October 2017, so it is the largest flare we have seen in nearly five years.

I was recently chatting to Richard VA7RJQ on the 6m band and he mentioned that he was taking pictures of the sun, which requires special filters.



This picture was taken by Richard during April with a 400 mm refractor and a Fabry-Perot etalon H alpha filter. You can clearly see some sunspots.

Speaking of 6m, we are coming up to the Sporadic E season. When in full swing you should be able to work stations all over the USA even with a simple 6m wire antenna. Last year there were several openings to Japan as well.

HF conditions are generally good, so it might be time to dig out your HF radio again and start thinking about some antennas. If you need some help NARA offers a short 20-minute course for licensed amateurs called **'Backyard Antennas for HF'** to help you consider your options. This can be delivered over Zoom. For more information contact Mike VA7WPM at keelcove@shaw.ca.

I don't like to end on a sad note but friend Roger Western G3SXW in the UK, an extraordinary CW operator, contesteer, and DXpeditioner became a silent key in April. After falling from his ladder while cleaning his gutters two and a half years ago, Roger's health declined signifi-

cantly. Roger had a legendary reputation among DXers for activating over 70 DX locations; from all over the Pacific, Africa, and Indian Ocean, in fact from all over the globe. Roger has given so many of us many new countries. With condolences to Rogers family, may he RIP.

Allstar Repeater – Chris VE7TOP

There is now a linked AllStar repeater in Nanaimo providing access to many other repeaters in the BC Hub and Canada Hub systems. This is an analog UHF repeater, VE7VDX, on the frequency 440.175 (114.8 tone, up 5.0, P25 Mixed Mode NAC 255, Nanaimo Allstar 450528)

The repeater is located at VE7TOP's home on McGirr Road in Nanaimo, a less than optimal coverage location for much of Nanaimo, but excellent to the Sunshine Coast, North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Qualicum Beach, and Richmond. This is part of the repeater network sponsored by the North Fraser Amateur Radio Club. For more information and a list of their affiliated repeaters go to their website, www.ve7nfr.com.

Another access to the AllStar system is VE7NWR 145.390 100.0 in New Westminster.

The following nets can be found on The Canada Hub. All times are local.

Mondays 4 pm: The All-Hams Roundtable

Mondays 5 pm: The Sounds Good Net

Tuesdays 4 pm: The Absolute Tech Net

Thursdays 4 pm: The Triode Net

Saturdays either 1 pm or 1:30 pm: The TOP TALK net

Saturdays 6 pm to 8pm: The Science Net

Sundays 10 am: The Trans-Canada Net.

More information about the Canada Hub can be found at this link: <https://thecanadahub.ca/>.

For information about the AllStar network go to: <https://www.allstarlink.org/>.

Platinum Jubilee - Special Prefix

To celebrate Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee (70 years on the throne), Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) has authorized special prefixes for radio amateurs in Canada, during the period May 15 to July 14. VE stations can use VX, VA stations can use the VG, VO stations XJ and VY stations can use the XK prefix. Check on the ISED site before using these prefixes.

Merville Swapmeet

The Merville Swapmeet on April 10 was considered a great success by the organizers, the Comox ARC, with lots of buying and selling. More than 110 amateurs attended. NARA sold a lot of equipment there which was not needed by the club after the Wingrove Street fire.



Salt Spring Island YL net

Salt Spring Island women hams would like to invite YLs from NARA, or anywhere else, to join their Tuesday 7 pm net, held on the Salt Spring Island repeater VE7RSI (147.320 MHz + shift and 88.5 Hz tone). This net was formed to practise radio skills on the air.

Travel for the Amateur



The world seems to be opening up again, dependent on the vagaries of the covid pandemic, meaning travel is returning. And one fun of part of being a ham can be making contacts while in a different country. This is a guideline only, and for detailed information consult RAC, ISED, or the radio agency setting the rules at your desti-

nation. In many countries amateur frequencies and regulations around their use differ. Know before you go, and if in doubt leave it out.

Within Canada

- When in another province it is good practice to append the prefix for that province to your call sign. For example, if in Alberta, "this is VE7NA/VE6."

In the USA

- No special permits or permissions are required for Canadians to operate in the United States. Under an agreement between the two countries, whatever operating privileges or restrictions you have in Canada also apply in the US. Canadians must also abide by all American regulations. Note also that Canadian hams operating in the US "shall indicate at least once during each contact with another station its geographical location as nearly as possible by city and state." When operating in the US you are required on each contact is to append to you're your Canadian call sign the US district prefix followed by the nearest city and state. For example, "this is VE7NA/W9 in Chicago Illinois."

Outside Canada and the US

- Going abroad anywhere else may require either a CEPT application made via RAC or, if the host country is not part of CEPT, direct arrangements with the country in question. Be aware that holding Advanced qualification is a prerequisite to qualify for CEPT. When operating in a CEPT country the call sign prefix of that country **must precede** your Canadian call sign. For example, if in Scotland, "this is GM/VE7NA." In a number of countries, such as Mexico, neither CEPT nor Canadian call signs are recognized, and special arrangements are required to operate. If you are intending to operate in a country which requires special licensing arrangements, be aware that you may need to apply as much as three months (or more) in advance and that **before** going on the air your station may require an inspection. Also, you must read in the licence about which bands and modes you can use in that country, as their table of frequencies may not be the same as Canada.

Flying with radios

- Rules about flying with lithium batteries and electronics may differ from airline to airline. Get the details from your airline.

Airport Security

If you are taking radio equipment onto the aircraft as hand luggage, use the same procedure as if your equipment was a computer. Commercially built equipment normally does not present any problems, but like a computer it should go through the X-Ray machine as a separate item. Always have your Canadian licence with you just in case. If you are entering a foreign country with radio equipment, again, have some evidence of your permission to operate in that country. Also, when you return to Canada you might need to prove that you purchased the equipment in Canada.

Boaters

- Those travelling by boat in international waters may qualify for a VEO call sign from ISED, but must use their regular call sign when within domestic waters for voice and digital. Remember, the above requirements around CEPT or contacting relevant foreign authorities apply to all boaters using amateur radio in ports outside Canada or the US. Those on cruise ships should contact their cruise line.

Last word

- Above all, use discretion and common sense when operating abroad, and know and adhere to all regulations. In most places you are likely to have a lot of fun, be greeted with enthusiasm by local hams, and make new friends. And there are other places where walking around with a handheld radio, operating illegally, or confusion over the use of amateur frequencies may bring serious trouble. Get all the details and understand them before you go.

NARA Training

NARA is planning to make more training available this year, thanks to a small group of NARA members who have formed an ad hoc training group.

A Basic course is in the works for this fall. The plan is for two-hour sessions over an eight-week period this October and November. The course will be a visually orientated step-by-step learning process and will include a review of typical exam questions.

At present the plan is to deliver all of the NARA courses via Zoom. If you know of someone who would like to attend the Basic exam course in the fall, or the short

courses listed below please contact Mike VA7WPM at keelcove@shaw.ca.

The following short 20-minute sessions are available:

Discover Amateur Radio	Interesting for someone who has heard about Amateur Radio and wishes to know more
Backyard antennas for HF	Post Basic Exam
Getting Going on the VHF/UHF Bands	Post Basic Exam
Introduction to Dxing	This is a 1+ hour presentation

Community Service Section

In the past NARA members have provided radio communications services for various local events. The Bathtub race has been a fun NARA project for many years, and last year NARA extended its participation to the locally organized off-road bike race in the back country south west of Mount Benson. During last year's bike race NARA members primarily used the 70cm Mount Benson repeater (removed from the ITS for the day) and also tested out 80m SSB over this hilly terrain. This year NARA is planning to use a portable 70cm repeater at the same event.

Three events are likely to be handled this year under the banner of NARA Community Radio Services. The first will be the annual Nanaimo off-road bike race which will be held in late August/early September, and the second will be the Vancouver Island Exhibition (VIE) over the weekend of August 27-29. When more information becomes available NARA will contact members to ask if they are available to assist. Also, it seems that the Bathtub race will be back again this year, which may present another opportunity for the NARA Community Radio Service section.

The volunteer group of NARA members producing this newsletter would like to thank all those who provided material for this month's issue.

The NARA newsletter is normally published on the last Friday of the month proceeding the month of issue.

News items and comments should be mailed to

news@ve7na.ca