

NARA Newsletter



President's Message – Randy VE7FAA

NARA had to do some extensive spring cleaning this year after a fire in March destroyed our clubhouse but spared our gear, and now it's time for fall housekeeping.

Among the upcoming priorities for NARA is the annual election at the November annual general meeting. NARA meetings are now hybrid, online and in person, and we encourage you to attend and vote as a way to support your club. On that note, dues became payable this month and the final date for payment is Nov. 30.

Know that in the area of funds NARA is now in possession of a generous bequest from silent key and long time NARA member Bob Smits VE7HS. That legacy is now securely invested by the club.

As part of the process of recovery after the fire NARA has been consulting with the Air Cadet 205 Collishaw Squadron. NARA had a successful Field Day at their site a few years ago, and now the club is looking at putting on Basic courses for air cadets. The possibility of NARA making use of the squadron facility is also being explored.

The club is also putting on a Basic course for all comers, to be offered over Zoom, beginning in October. And for those who want to expand their learning about the wide world of ham radio, tech talks are also set to resume. Work also continues to get a club DMR repeater up and running and details will be released when that's done.

Something to look forward to after a two-year hiatus is the resumption of the NARA Christmas dinner. Again, members will get all details once finalized.

Finally, as this edition is prepared we watch as Maritimers clean up after the destructive Hurricane Fiona and Florida is devastated by Hurricane Ian. Do not forget that last November BC was pounded by unprecedented rains and flooding that caused extensive damage. If Emcomm is part of your amateur radio experience, have your grab & go kit ready and make sure all your systems are prepared and secure.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

It was only a few months ago that many countries, including Canada, were celebrating the diamond jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II using special callsign prefixes. On September 8 the

Queen of England, Canada and many Commonwealth countries died peacefully at Balmoral Castle in Scotland surrounded by her family. Whatever one's personal views of the UK monarchy there is no question that Queen Elizabeth II carried out her constitutional duties with dignity and with stability and continuity. She was the example of a dedicated work ethic and service to the public. We also remember that HRH Prince Philip was the patron of the Radio Society of Great Britain since 1952, so the Royal family has been directly associated with the amateur radio service for some seven decades.



The Queen and Prince Philip on their last visit to Vancouver Island (Victoria and Nanaimo) in 2002

Swap Meet in Victoria

The first Swapmeet in Victoria in some 19 years took place at the Da Vinci Centre on August 25, with several NARA members in attendance. It was an interesting day with lots of stuff for sale. It was good to see ICOM attending the event and providing a handheld radio as the main prize in the raffle. In the parking lot a number of emergency groups, primarily from the Victoria area, displayed their equipment and emergency trailers.

Pactor 4 in the USA

Under normal circumstances the US Federal Communications Commission does not permit the use of the mode Pactor 4 on the HF bands in the USA. However, because of the huge impact of hurricane Ian the FCC has granted a 60-day waiver which permits Pactor 4 Winlink for hurricane relief. Pactor 4, permitted in Canada, has a faster throughput than Pactor 3 but does not exceed the permitted bandwidth of 6 KHz for most of the HF bands in Canada.

How is DX – David VA7DXX

In the July edition of the NARA Newsletter I mentioned the callsign 4U1ITU, the station at the Headquarters of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in Geneva. Recent reports suggest that 4U1ITU will be on the air only for a few more months and then likely off the air for some seven years. Apparently, the building which houses 4U1ITU is being rebuilt. Since 4U1ITU counts as a country for DXCC this is indeed unfortunate, and we can only hope that the hams in Geneva can find a way of keeping the station callsign on the air.



The 4U1ITU building in Geneva, Switzerland

Radio conditions generally are improving as we move towards the peak of sunspot cycle 25, expected around December 2025. In early September I was tuning the lower end of 20m CW and heard VU2TMP (southern India) repeatedly calling CQ at 569 with no one replying. I called him and he struggled to hear me, but eventually received my callsign correctly. I have only contacted India ten times from Canada in the last 25 years so it was a good catch over the difficult North Pole path. A week later I managed to work 3B8/G4BUO who was on holiday in Mauritius.

With regard to the underutilized HF 60m band with the recent addition of three new countries - Botswana, Lesotho and Eswatini - there are now 89 countries who now permit 60m operation, including Canada of course. I have not been too active on the 60m band myself but according to my electronic

logbook I have worked 29 countries on the 60m band, the best distance being South Africa. There have been recent changes to the band frequency allocations in Canada, for details see <https://www.rac.ca/two-new-bands-for-canadian-amateurs/>

For those interested in the very low noise digital mode WSPR news that a new beacon has been established on Gough Island using the callsign ZD9SSS. The operating frequencies are 14.100, 18.110, 21.100, 24.930 and 28.126 MHz An interesting WSPR website is <http://wspr.rocks>.



Gough Island, a rugged volcanic island in the South Atlantic, is uninhabited apart from staff at the weather station

The general improvement in band conditions and, at present the covid situation means that Dxpeditions, the lifeblood for a DXer, are retuning. In October the following Dxpeditions are anticipated: Marquesas (TX7G), Comoros (D60AE), Madagascar (the 5R8 callsign to be announced), Benin (TY0RU), Monaco (3A callsign to be announced), Belize (V3E), Saba & Sint Eustatius (PJ5 callsign to be announced) Cocos Keeling (VK9CM), Papua New Guinea (P29RO) and finally the one I shall be especially looking for Djibouti J28MD.



The upcoming Djibouti J28MD Dxpedition logo

Salt Spring Island Fall Fair

Each year Salt Spring Islanders hold a Fall Fair and this year it included an exhibit from the Salt Spring Island Amateur Radio Club. The exhibit concentrated on digital modes including APRS, Winlink and AREDN.



The SSIARS booth at the 2022 SSI Fall Fair

Next NARA Meeting

NARA is establishing a pattern for its general meetings which reconvened in September after the summer break. Future meetings will continue to be hybrid in as much as you can either attend in person or tune in via Zoom. Bugs in the audio system at the September meeting will hopefully be fully resolved in October. The next NARA general meeting is on Oct 13, watch for the meeting notice by email.

220 MHz

Judging by the number of NARA members and others using the 220 MHz band it is becoming increasingly popular in the Nanaimo area.

The VA7DXH FM repeater has certainly persuaded many to dust off their 220 MHz radios and get onto the band. The VA7DXH repeater, near Ladysmith, provides good hand held radio coverage over most of Nanaimo and much of Gabriola Island and is routinely worked by fixed stations in the Comox area.

With Christmas on the horizon it's worth knowing that several manufacturers make radios which work on the 220 MHz band.

2023 Mid Island Bike Race

Following a successful bike race on August 28, NARA is pleased to be able to report that the bike race organizers have asked NARA members to assist with safety issues again next year.

The bike race allows NARA members to exercise their skills in supporting public service in the Nanaimo area, skills such as net procedures, radio operation, portable repeater operation

and the use of emergency power. NARA thanks all those who took part and is looking forward to the 2023 event.

ITU - Breaking News

Tim Ellam VE6SH (IARU President & NARA member) reports from the ITU meeting in Bucharest, Romania that the ITU has named a new Secretary General for the International Telecommunications Union, Doreen Bogdan-Martin who also happens to be a licensed radio amateur KD2JTX of Spring Lake, NJ.



L to R: IARU President Tim Ellam VE6SH; ITU Secretary-General elect Doreen Bogdan-Martin KD2JTX and ARRL Technical Relations Specialist Jon Siverling WB3ERA

The ITU meeting in Bucharest is called PP-22 (Plenipotentiary Conference) which sets out the organizations roadmap for the period 2024 to 2027. These PP conferences are held every four years and they also select its top management for the ITU Secretariat.

Having the International Amateur Radio Union represent the Amateur Service at these conferences is an enormous advantage for amateur radio worldwide. You can support the IARU by joining your own national radio society which in the case of Canada is the Radio Amateurs of Canada.

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 preceding the month of issue.

News items and comments should be mailed to:

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