



Nortown Amateur Radio Club

Minutes of the February 20th, 2009 Meeting

Present:

John VA3MDJ
Ian VE3IJS
John VA3AAD

Cyril VA3CJE
Elliot VA3EJF
Bert VE3ENA

Vipi VE3PID
Doug VE3EES

Recent member-attendees who were absent:

Claus VE3PMD
Sam VA3SEP
Andrew VA3CRA
Jost VE3SWI
Bernie VE3OTR
Jim VE3GRT

Bill VE3WHW
Rej VA3REJ
Ron VA3CCR
Tony VE3VME
Martin VE3MHC
Frans VE3VNC

Geoff VA3GEG
Tom VE3TEG
Jana VE3BFU
Paul VE3PGF
David VE3VNE
Jal VE3SOC

John, VA3MDJ chaired the meeting.

Old Business

Repeater

John, VA3MDJ stated that he and John, VA3AAD again had not been able to get together to work on the repeater, as was outlined in the January minutes, but that he was hopeful that some progress would be made shortly.

[To date, VA3MDJ, VA3CJE, VE3IJS, VA3EJF, VE3EES, VA3AAD and VE3ENA have all reported that they can trigger the repeater from their QTH's. Other members who would like to receive advice or assistance in establishing a connection should not hesitate to contact one of these members.]

RAC Insurance:

John, VA3MDJ confirmed that the letter to RAC that had been approved at the last meeting, and that was attached to the last minutes, had been mailed on February 12th.

The letter was copied to nine RAC directors and 36 clubs using the RAC insurance policy. To date one appreciative reply had been received, from the ARES club in Winnipeg.

Ontario Bill 118

John, VA3MDJ stated that there were no further developments on this issue, but that he would continue to monitor the proposal and report to the Club as soon as it appeared that effective action might be warranted. He expressed the opinion that eventually, mobile radios or handhelds used in a vehicle will require Bluetooth compatibility, so as to permit hands-free operation though to comply with the Bill as written, such devices would have feature no “screen” visible to the driver.

It is unclear how current broadcast car radios with a “screen” that shows the frequency being received or the time etc. could continue to be used under the bill.

New Business

Financial

John, VA3AAD, (pdf file attached) described the current financial condition of the Club, and compared this fiscal year’s income and expenses to the two previous years. Key points arising out of his analysis are:

- Currently, the Club has 18 dues-paying members plus another 8 who have been active in recent years, but who have not contributed this year.
- Without voluntary contributions, over and above the dues from the current members, the Club probably could not continue to function.
- Donations of equipment for resale by the Club have been a significant source of income during the past two years.
- As of December 31st, 2008, the Club had \$1,420 in the bank. Projected expenses between now and July 31st, 2009 (to the end of this fiscal year) will reduce our bank balance to less than \$600. We will still owe \$500 to one of the Club members for money spent prior to 2006, building the repeater, which will be repaid the following year.
- If ongoing income and expenditures remain relatively constant, we can project an annual surplus of about \$300 for 2009/10, some of which will be used to retire the debt.

John, VA3MDJ, urged members receiving these minutes, who have not contributed this year, to consider expressing support by mailing a check to the Club at PO Box 91104, RPO Bayview Village, North York, ON, M2K 2Y6, or by donating surplus equipment that could be resold..

The coffee collection yielded \$7.80. There was no equipment raffle..

Albert Yates Trophy – Don Guthrie

It was agreed unanimously that the 2008 award should be awarded to VE3EVZ, Life Member and Past-President Don Guthrie, for the competent and professional manner in

which he and his skilled assistant overcame a number of challenges to install the Club's repeater antenna. John, VA3AAD, will arrange to have a plaque prepared for Don, with an appropriate engraved inscription.

Field Day

Please mark your calendars now for June 27th, so that we can plan for a great turnout. There was a consensus within the group that we may be getting a little old now for tower set-up and that we should put our heads together to figure out ways to string up wire antennas using trees and fiberglass poles. Plans for the event will be developed during future meetings.

Equipment Schematics and Manuals

Ian, VA3IJS, stated that the web site <http://www.mods.dk/manual.php> was an excellent source for radio manuals and schematics, as well as for modifications.

Presentation

Elliot, VA3EJF, using a Rogers Mobile Internet card attached to his laptop, gave a demonstration of Skype. (The Internet card would not have been necessary, had there been a DSL or cable connection in the meeting room.). Skype is software that allows one to make computer to computer voice calls anywhere in the world at no cost. Computer to landline calls can also be made at minimal cost. Information on Skype can be accessed at <http://www.skype.com/>. Skype calls can be made using the computer key pad and microphone or with a telephone like device connected to a USB port.



Even more interesting, Elliot demonstrated a small device called "Magic Jack". This plugs into a computer's USB port. At its other end is telephone jack into which an

ordinary telephone with a common (RJ11) plug is inserted. The device has its own US telephone number, costs \$40 US for the first year and \$20 for each subsequent year. It can be used to send or to receive internet calls to or from other US and Canada landline phones, with no additional time charges. Sound quality was excellent. The web site is at:

<http://www.magicjack.com/4/index.asp>

but see also:

<http://hubpages.com/hub/Magic-Jack---Not-A-Bad-Gadget-for-Free-Calling>

For those who might want to purchase a Magic Jack there is a Canadian seller in Scarborough who handles the product. (\$59.95 CAD incl 1 year service/shipping/taxes)

See: www.Alphalinks.ca



Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at 8:00 PM on March 6th at the Bayview Community Centre. Bert, VE3ENA, has developed an interesting presentation on Integrated Digital Electronics that you won't want to miss.

John Shepherd, VA3AAD

and

John Carlisle, VA3MDJ