The *ORC Newsletter*

Volume XXVIV	March, 2011	Number 3

From the President

DE Dave Barrow (N9UNR)

Somehow or other it didn't penetrate my memory but our illustrious 1st Vice President, Chuck Curran dropped the A from his call. He is W9POU – f/k/a WA9POU.

Last week I sent a message to each of you to ask YOUR federal legislators to cosponsor bills that ask Homeland Security to review Amateur Radio capabilities. The "squeaky wheel" gets the grease. If you want our frequency allocations to vanish continue to be a part of the "silent majority". A point being made in BOTH of these bills is a review of the necessity of antenna restrictions. This could have a significant effect for those of you in condos and subdivisions. Take a few moments and get YOUR senators and representative behind this measure. It does NOT involve spending money. It is basically to get Homeland Security to realize what a tremendous resource Amateur Radio provides.

There is another proposal at the federal level HR 607, which, if passed will lose our 440 MHz frequencies. I will forward a separate message on this.

The ORC is a marvelous organization – but it won't run itself. There are a number of things that have to be done to keep what we have. We desperately need a membership chair and a program chair. Please contact Chuck Curran if you can help with either of these functions.

Contesting

DE Bob Truscott (W9LO)

It's WISCONSIN QSO PARTY time again. Sunday, March 13 from 1:00 PM to 8:00 PM local time. CW/phone or a combination of the two. All bands, 80 thru 10 meters HF, plus VHF.

This is the "biggie"–We won the club competition several years ago and might be able to do it again this year if enough of us make a serious effort to do so. We'll need help from a whole bunch of people to get the job done, so even if contesting is not your "thing", I hope that many of you will join in for as much time as you can spare. Pick your mode, pick your band, and have some fun. Submit your logs even if you have only a few contacts on them-if enough of us do that we just might win the plaque

Note that Sunday is the first day of daylight savings time, so be sure set your clocks ahead an hour before you go to bed on Saturday night. Get the rules at www.warac.org.

I'll see you in the contest.

Bob, W9LO

Computer Corner

De Stan Kaplan (WB9RQR)

No. 157. Puran Defrag, a Book on Windows 7, and SlimDrivers

There is a new (free) defragmenting program available that merits your attention. Puran Defrag (latest version at this writing is 7.2), available at http://www.puransoftware.com/, is a simple but highly effective disk defragmenter. It

can be completely automatic (if you so select), and will even do a boot time defragmentation of the Registry, pagefile and MFT – things that cannot be manipulated safely while Windows is running. The program that does run when Windows is up does its job intelligently, putting files that are used more often on faster areas of the disk platter (disk optimization). It works with XP, 2003, Vista, 2008 and 7. You can also get it at http://www.majorgeeks.com, where it is touted as a pick (a winner). You know, given that you have a speedy CPU and enough memory, there is no other single thing that you can do to keep your machine speedy than to keep it defragmented. Puran defrag not buggy or complicated, and it appears to be the best defragging software currently available. Try it.

Many folks are moving to Windows 7, and rightly so. It has been widely accepted as the best Microsoft operating system ever. Very stable, intuitive, foxy, and so on. But, it is an operating system and there is no way to learn all the ins and outs without a reference. If you have Windows 7 now or are thinking seriously about getting it, let me refer you to what I consider a superb reference. It is WINDOWS 7 – THE MISSING MANUAL, THE BOOK THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN IN THE BOX, by David Pogue, ISBN: 978-0-596-80639-2. Published by O'Reilly Media, Inc., 1005 Gravenstein Highway North, Sebastopol, CA 95472. Take a look at their website – www.oreilly.com - and you can search there for how to order the book if you want it. Retail price is $39.99, and well worth it. The book is very well written and clear and the author doesn't hesitate to tell you when a feature is useless or does not work correctly. It is witty and actually funny in places, a welcome relief from the usual computer manual. I have read it through once and am about ¾ done with a second reading and find that I have learned much about Windows 7 from it.

By the way, Windows 7 Service Release 1 is out. It is worth installing, though there are not a lot of changes you will observe as you work with your machine after SR1 is installed. Several gurus have observed that the reason for this is that Windows 7 is already so good. It really is. Still, install SR1 to keep all the hidden processes up to date. Give yourself an hour of free time to get it done.

I found another marvelous, free program in mid-February, and have installed and run it on my six home computers and another four that I take care of remotely. It is SlimDrivers, put out by Slim Utilities, a company that uses cloud computing to help target their software to your machine. I won't go into cloud computing, but let me explain what the program does. Basically, it scans your computer for missing or outdated device drivers and installs whatever is necessary (with your permission, of course). You might think your machine is up-to-date with regard to drivers, but I promise you, it is not. Driver updates are written and released constantly without any regard of how to get them to end-users. So, even a month after purchasing a new machine, some of your drivers may be out of date. Or even the same day you purchase it!

Let me move off the point a bit to define device drivers for you so that you know how important they are. The Windows operating system does not know how to communicate with the hardware devices connected to your computer. It doesn't even know how to communicate with the hardware that is built into your computer. Imagine that! But it is true. A driver is a (usually small) software program that tells Windows how to communicate with a particular hardware device. Video card drivers tell your video card exactly how to translate data coming from Windows into signals that can be sent to your monitor so as to show on the display. A keyboard driver tells Windows how to interpret the electrical signals coming in from the keyboard as letters, numbers or control key functions. There are drivers for sound cards, USB hubs, printers, network connections and so on. Some are not so obvious. If you have a laptop that has a PCMCIA slot to accept modem or wireless cards, there has to be a driver for that slot for it to work. There are even drivers for slots on the inside of your computer, and even for parts of the buss on the motherboard. Windows is written for everyone, but everyone's computer is not hardware-identical with all others. Drivers translate what you and Windows want into a language that the hardware can understand (and vice versa). Darned important! And, a hardware driver is used each time Windows needs to communicate with that hardware.

When Windows is first installed, there are literally thousands of drivers built into the installation

files that come with the disk. Furthermore, once you install Windows, there is a database of drivers on your hard drive forever, so that if you add a new device, it is likely that Windows will find the proper driver to install. However, if you install a new device, let's say a printer, you should really use the CD that came with the printer. Why? Although Windows may well have a driver in the database to use, the one on that disk that came with the printer is likely to be newer than the one in the Windows database. Nevertheless, the one on the disk that came with the printer may itself be outdated! A newer driver written by the hardware manufacturer may be available. That is where SlimDrivers comes in.

Download SlimDrivers and install it, and run it. It will ask your permission to scan your machine, and if you let it, it will most assuredly find some drivers that are outdated. When it finds and reports the drivers, you have the opportunity to select one for updating. The program will then ask you if it can turn off Microsoft Updates (temporarily – it turns it back on for you later), so that there is no chance that Microsoft will reboot your machine during the update process. Let it. Then it will ask if you wish a restore point before installation of a new driver. Say yes, in case anything goes wrong. Then it will back up your current drivers as an added safety measure. Then it will download and install the new driver. It may ask if it can reboot at this point. If it does, a reboot is a good idea – to finish installing the driver completely.

You may have to do all this several times, once for each driver that needs updating, so give yourself some time to accomplish this update process. If you pay for the program, it will do all of them in one batch, but the free program will only do them one at a time. But that is OK – it is well worth the effort and you don't need to run this process often. When all finished downloading and installing, SlimDrivers sits in the background, looking for the release of new drivers for your machine. And, you are completely up to date.

In all fairness, let me reflect that there are two schools of thought concerning driver updates. Not whether or not you need a driver – you do if the device is to work at all – but whether or not you should always update to the latest driver re-lease. One school says yes, the latest driver is a Good Thing (I am in this school). The other says, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it". In other words, if you have a driver and the device is working, leave it alone. My point of view is that the manufacturer released an updated driver to fix problems and provide new capabilities. That cost the manufacturer money, effort and time as part of its support function. Far be it for me to reject that upgrade. It costs me nothing except the time to install it.

Where can you get SlimDrivers? The best place on the planet for free software – www.major-geeks.com. Happy computing!

THE COMPUTER CORNER
No. 157. Puran Defrag, a Book on Windows 7, and SlimDrivers
Stan Kaplan, WB9RQR
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New Members

De Janice Hoettels (KA9VVQ)

Meet **Art Davidson, KC9PXR**, a new member of the Ozaukee Radio Club.

Art has actually been a member of the ORC since late 2009, joining the club at the ORC fall hamfest. But a busy work schedule has kept him from attending many ORC meetings, though this should now change as Art recently retired from his practice as an anesthesiologist.

Art first became interested in ham radio when he was 15 years old. Back then, he built a Heathkit shortwave receiver and became an active SWL and QSL card collector. But as often happens, his ham hobby took a back seat to schooling, career, and family concerns. An Illinois native, Art went to the University of Illinois for pre-med studies and medical school. He then came to Wisconsin to complete his residency in anes-thesiology at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

After 28 years as a practicing anesthesiologist, Art decided to hang up his lab coat and scrubs to pursue a litany of other interests. Of these, ham radio aims to play a big part in his retire-ment. Art obtained his Technician license in the summer of 2009 and his General class license in the summer of 2010. He recently completed his first QSO (we all know how nerve wracking that can be!) and plans to become an active DX chaser. His station includes a Yaesu FT 950 and a Hustler 6BTV 25 foot vertical antenna with 32 radials.

In his new-found spare time, Art is brushing up on his calculus with the intent of returning to school (at UWM) to pursue a lifelong interest in

astrophysics. Art also likes zipping around on his motorcycle (a Ducati Monster 696). Later this summer he intends to return to his interest in high altitude mountaineering by climbing Forbidden Peak in the Cascades. He unsuccessfully attempted this climb twice in the 1990s. He's hoping that the third time's a charm.

Art resides in Mequon with his wife Pam. They are looking forward to becoming first-time grandparents in June!

Welcome to the ORC Art!

New Members
de Janice Hoettels, KA9VVQ

Meet **Tom Trethewey, KC9ONY**, a new member of the Ozaukee Radio Club.

Tom isn't a new-new member to the club, having joined about a year ago. But working the night shift had until recently prevented him from attending many club meetings. Tom was introduced to ham radio and the club by ORC members Bill Howe, KA9WRL, and Loren Jentz, N9ENR. Tom credits Loren, his "Elmer", with helping him pass his Technician class license exam back in November 2008. Tom then went on to pass the General exam in January 2009 and the Extra class exam the following June.

Tom hails from Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, though he has spent most of his life in Wisconsin. He graduated from high school in Madison and went on to obtain his Associate Degree in Electronic Communication from MATC in 1980. Subsequently, he joined WITI TV Channel 6 in Milwaukee, where he has worked as a broadcast engineer for the past 22 years.

Tom, along with several other ORC members, is active in LeFrog (**LEFROG**) (see the accompanying article about LeFrog elsewhere in this newsletter). He is presently learning about D-Star, as installation of a D-Star repeater is a current major project of LeFrog. Tom is also active on the 2 meter and 70 cm bands, and he would like to eventually get involved in satellite operating.

Tom lives in Cedarburg. His other interests include bike riding and tennis.

Welcome to the ORC Tom!

Meet Arduino
By Gary Sutcliffe, W9XT

Years ago I was an electrical engineering student at the University of Wisconsin. Being a ham, I expected I would get into something involving radio. Then these things called microprocessors appeared on the scene and caught my interest. Imagine, a computer you can hold in your hand! Most computers in those days filled a large room. A "small" computer took a whole rack. Best of all, you could use one of those things to control stuff. I was hooked, and microprocessor based systems became my main professional interest.

I have heard that the microprocessors in PCs and other computers amount to only 2% of the microprocessors produced. The rest are in the form of microcontrollers. Microcontrollers are microprocessors with special internal peripherals on chip, and usually memory as well. These special peripherals let you interface the micro to external hardware like switches, sensors, displays, motors and other things. You will find microcontrollers in all sorts of things like your microwave oven, cell phone, and TV remote. There are probably over a dozen in your car. I heard there is even a disposable razor with one in it.

Of course your ham shack is likely loaded with them.

To design a microcontroller based system you needed to know a fair amount of electronics, computer architecture and how to program. It required a lot of knowledge just to get started, not to mention a pile of expensive development equipment.

The Arduino changes all that. For $30 you can get a circuit board with a microcontroller on it that can be easily hooked up to external electronics. The development software is a free download. Just download the software, plug the Arduino into a PC USB port and start your project.

Photo Captions:
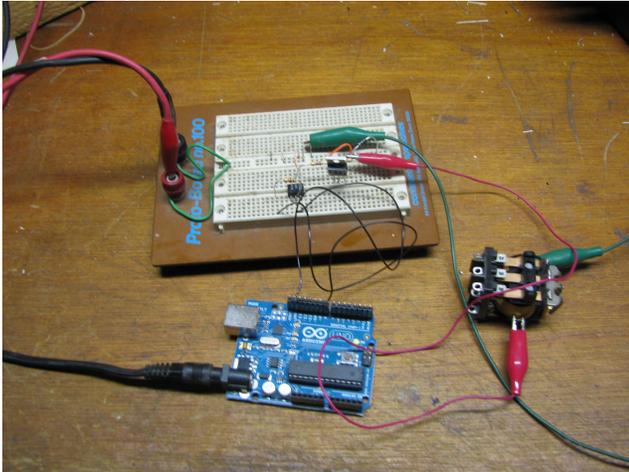
Arduino is shown in a quick and dirty bench project.

The Arduino system was developed by a group of Italian educators who wanted a way to teach microcontrollers to non-engineering students. The development software lets you program in the C programming language. This programming language is the most popular one for professional microcontroller development, but a lot of the low level nitty gritty stuff that really takes a fair amount of knowledge and time to get right is already done for you.

When computer programmers learn to program, their first program is usually to print the words "Hello, world!" on the screen. Embedded microcontroller programmers blink an LED. I believe someone with little knowledge of electronics, no computer programming experience, and basic PC skills can get the LED blinking in an hour. It

probably took me weeks of classes to get to that point in college.

Another feature of the Arduino is the form factor. There are connectors for the input and output lines. You can connect external components to those connectors, or you can plug in another circuit board into it. These special boards are called "Shields" because they "shield" you from the electronics. Do you want to control a motor but don't know what electronics you need? Buy or build a motor shield. Want to connect it to the Internet? Get an Ethernet shield. There are at least 220 commercially available shields plus hundreds of other designs available on the Internet if you want to build your own.

The hardware and software are open source. There is a ton of information available and there are probably thousands of projects detailed on line. There are lots of on-line forums to ask for help and tutorials on writing software. It is all there for the price of an Internet connection.

There have been other attempts come up with something like this, but for a number of reasons I was never impressed with them. I was hearing so much about the Arduino I decided to buy one and see what the excitement was all about. I played around with it and thought it was OK, but just something for students to play with. After all I am a professional with over 30 years experience and have a lot of expensive development equipment.

Then one day I needed to throw something together for a quick and dirty proof of concept. I was going to wire up a bare microcontroller and write some software. I figured it would take about 3 hours to get it going. Then I remembered the Arduino sitting in a box. I dug it out and hooked up the circuit in about 10 minutes. It took me about 5 minutes to write the software. I was hooked on using the Arduino for things like that and used it for several other projects since then.

I was so impressed with the concept I developed and now sell a shield of my own design. It has an LCD alphanumeric display, user switches, an LED and buzzer. If your project needs a way to communicate with a human, this shield is a quick and simple way to achieve it.
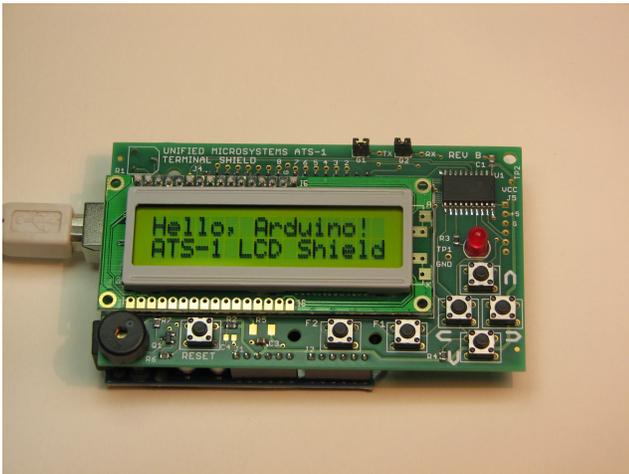
Arduino LCD terminal shield developed by Gary Sutcliffe (ATS1W9XT)

What about ham radio projects? I really have not searched for Arduino ham radio projects but have come across them used for repeater controllers, CW keyers, rotor controls, satellite tracking, APRS, and systems for controlling multiple radios in a contest. That is probably just scratching the surface.

You won't be a microcontroller expert after playing with the Arduino for a few hours. There is still a lot to learn, but the Arduino lets you quickly get going. You can concentrate on one area of hardware or software at a time and make incremental progress as your journey progresses.

If you ever had an interest in doing a project that would be neater with a little intelligent controller, or just learn a bit more about microcontrollers the Arduino would be a great place to start. The main web site is at **www.arduino.com** There are a number of mail order companies in the US that sell them.

Of Hams and Frogs…

de Janice Hoettels, KA9VVQ

On occasion during ORC meetings the word Le-Frog is bandied about. If you're a new club member, you might be wondering just what is LeFrog?

LeFrog (Local Emergency Field Radio Operating Group) was established in the Spring of 1987 by four Amateur Radio operators, Bill Howe, KA9WRL, Tom Murtaugh, W9VBQ, Jack Beck-

er, AE9H (now W9LOL), and Dick Strassburger, N9EEE. Since its inception, the group's main focus has been Jamboree On The Air (JOTA), held in conjunction with Boy Scout Troop 840 in Grafton, and Field Day.

LeFrog has been an ARRL affiliate since its inception, and it has earned 1st place awards for CQ Worldwide and Field Day. Last summer the group applied for and received its club call sign W9FRG.

According to ORC member and "head frog", Bill Howe, KA9WRL, the group is always looking for new members. Presently it has about 15, several of whom are also ORC members. Club meetings are held a few weeks before various events for planning purposes.

LeFrog's latest project is a full-stack D-Star Repeater system, which is being installed atop an apartment complex on the north side of Grafton. For starters, the repeater, which will be open access, will use 2m and 70cm for both voice and data. The repeater's range is expected to be approximately 30 miles in all directions at low (5W) power. The system should be on the air by this summer. Funding for this project has mainly come from the LeFrog's table sales at various hamfests in Wisconsin and Northern Illinois.

If you are interested in learning more about Le-Frog or joining the group, contact Bill Howe during an ORC meeting or via the ORC email page at http://www.ozaukeeradioclub.org/mailby-name.php

Club Static

"The February issue of the ORC Newsletter was the last one mailed to those of you who received the mailed copy last year, unless you have paid the extra $5.00 to defray some postage costs with this year's dues."
Thanks, Nels..**.**

Don't forget, contact Nels for room reservations for the Dayton Hamvention.

Speaking of hamfests, the Orlando Hamcation was great fun. I found broken stuff about which to negotiate prices and even some working stuff at a fair price. There were four of us HAMs here in the Sun-n-Fun early birds camp ground who whet to the Orlando swapmeet (which is a lot like the old Grays Lake event) on Friday and Saturday and had a great time. Best of all I visited with some ORC members at the event including Leon Rediske and the Potashs.

I had lunch with Naomi and Mark at the Orlando swapfest and had a great time discussing current events and their travel back and forth between Mequon and Florida.

Minutes of the Feb. 9, 2011 ORC Membership Meeting

By Nels Harvey, WA9JOB, Secretary.

preceding the meeting, Bill Howe, KA9WRL, setup a station on 75 Meters to give an opportunity for some to experience low band operation.

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 7:30 P.M. President Dave Barrow, N9UNR, presiding. Dave introduced Nate Seidler as a prospective Ham. Introduction of members and guests followed.

Stan Kaplan, WB9RQR, showed a lamp that he crafted from a decade box that was an auction item in January. Gary Sutcliff, W9XT, showed a small board made by Iguana Engineering Sales, that provides an interface to various project designs. Mark Tellier, AB9CD, told us about an

upcoming contest, and about a new swapfest to be held February 19, at the Ch. 10/36 Auction building in Brookfield. Nels Harvey, WA9JOB, requested any people interested in our annual trek to the Dayton Hamvention contact him for hotel reservations, Tom Nawrot, AA9XK, introduced the speakers for the night, Gary Stresman, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Science Education Foundation, and Mike Farmer, the Fair Director of the Badger State Science & Engineering Fair. Gary explained how important the fairs are in student development. Mike expressed a desire for Amateur Radio operators to contribute help to encourage future participants. He also pointed out Stan Kaplan WB9RQR's assistance for many years as an event judge, including as the Executive Coordinating judge. Stan then conducted a sparse auction with only three items. The Board meeting minutes were corrected, removing Tom Trethewey, KC9ONY's name from a committee that he wasn't a part of. The minutes were moved acceptance as corrected by Kent Christensen N9WH, seconded by Terry Koller, KA9RFM, and passed unanimously.

The Treasurer's report was moved acceptance by Nels Harvey seconded by Bill Howe, and passed unanimously.

The Repeater VP, Mark Tellier, reported no problems, but Jim Albrinck, K9QLP pointed out the 220 repeater was having some interference problems.

Bill Howe passed out ballots for the Ham of the Year, and Turkey awards, to be presented at the Post Everything Party March 5th.

It was moved by Bill Howe to extend the current budget temporarily, seconded by Kent Christensen, and passed unanimously.

Stan Kaplan moved to continue the traditional Corn Roast, seconded by Bill Howe, and passed unanimously.

Dave Barrow asked for a volunteer to contact people who have been missing the meetings, and Joe Sturmberg, KA9DFZ agreed to help.

Dave Barrow told the group that some Executive Board items may be decided using e-mail rather than meeting in person, for expediency.

The move to adjourn at 8:50 P.M. by Kent Christensen, and Stan Kaplan passed unanimously.

Attendance: Dave Barrow N9UNR, Ron Yokes W9BCK, Stan Kaplan WB9RQR, Kent Christensen N9WH, Ken Boston W9GA, Gary Sutcliff W9XT, Brian Skrentny, N9LOO, Tom Trethewey KC9ONY, Todd Fast N9DRY, Bob Frank, N9NRK, Terry Koller KA9RFM, John Thielen, WA9KNY, Jon Gilmore KB9RHZ, Tom Nawrot AA9XK, Janice Hottels KA9VVQ, Bill Howe KA9WRL, Mark Tellier AB9CD, Patrick Sullivan KC9LRK, Dan Hoffman N9KRC, Tom Murtaugh W9VBQ, Art Davidson KC9PXR, Ray Totske W9KHH, Keith Shilhavy KY9P, Nancy Stecker KC9FZK, Gary Sharbuno WI9M, Jim Albrinck K9QLP, Joe Sturmberg KA9DFZ, Nels Harvey WA9JOB, and guests, Gary Stresman and Mike Farmer, the program presenters and Nate Seidler.

AGENDA

March 9, 2011

1. 7:00 – 7:30 PM – Network & Rag Chew
2. Call to order – Dave Barrow (N9UNR)
3. Introductions.
4. Announcements, Bragging Rights, Show & Tell, Upcoming events, Etc.,
5. Program:
6. Fellowship Break
7. Auction.

8. Acceptance of Minutes as printed.
9. Treasurer's report – Nancy Stecker ()
10. Repeater report – Mark Tellier (AB9CD)
11. Committee reports.

    Other:
12. OLD BUSINESS
13. NEW BUSINESS

14. Adjournment to ?

Return undeliverable copies to

The ORC Newsletter

465 Beechwood Drive
Cedarburg WI* 53012

First Class

Next ORC Meeting

Grafton Senior Citizens Center

1665 7th Avenue, Grafton

Wednesday, March 9th

7:00 PM – doors open

7:30 – Membership Meeting