

Ham

RADIO

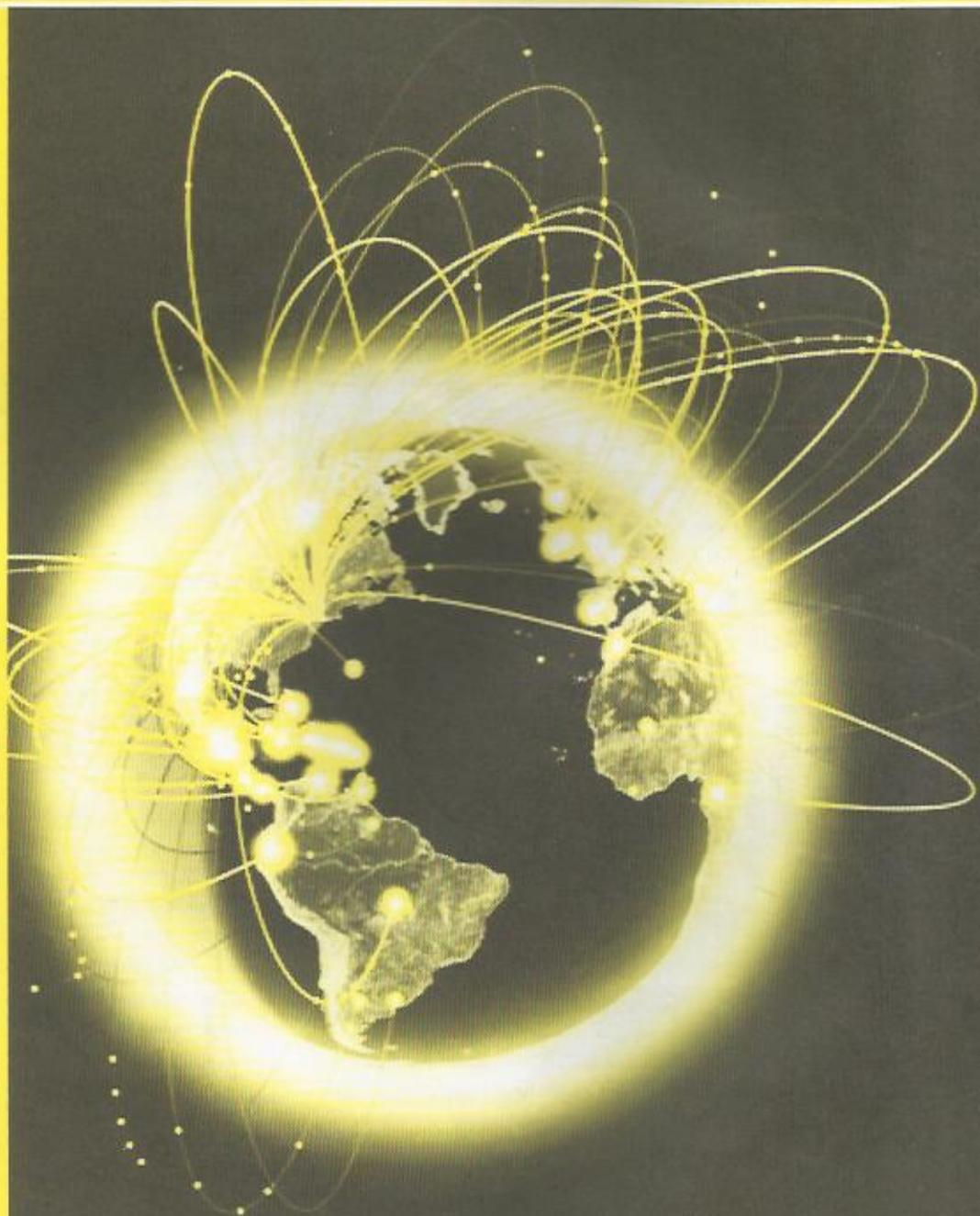
News

Newsletter of The Amateur Radio Society of India (Member of IARU)

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April-June 2009

Contents	Page
Hammenings	Inside front cover
President's Message	1
Editor's Greetings	1
Dxpedition to Desecheo	2
Holistic Hams	4
8th VHF Fox Hunt	6
Islands on the Air	7
Spotless Sun	8
Is Ham Radio Hot ?	Inside back cover



Unity is the motto

Hammenings



Ananda Bose VU2AMB addressing the Workshop on Ham Radio at the Indian Institute of Engineers, Nagpur



AT0EI group at Arnala



Gurgaon hams in an eyeball QSO with Ken Imamura JE6EIF

Expansion of 40 metre band

The International Amateur Radio Union, represented in India by ARSI, is working to get radio amateurs access to additional spectrum.

As of 29 March 2009, many countries will be allowing primary access to the segment 7.1 to 7.2 MHz to radio amateurs, till now occupied by broadcasting stations. ARSI has made a formal

application in April 2009 to the Ministry of Telecommunications to allow access to this segment to Indian amateurs.

A month before 29 March, the IARU Region 3 Monitoring Systems Coordinator B L (Arasu) Manohar VU2UR had identified 58 broadcasts in the segment 7100 to 7200 kHz. A follow-up scan was made in the next few weeks to identify any residual broadcasting activity.

Once the remaining broadcasters move, the allocation is expected to be completed. The departure of broadcasting stations has resulted in an enormous improvement in the usefulness of the 40-metre band for amateur radio communication.

New IARU officers

The nominations of Timothy S Ellam VE6SH/G4HUA to serve as President, and Ole Garpestad LA2RR to serve as Vice President of the IARU for a five-year term beginning on 9 May 2009 have been formally adopted.

EU-059 ColMM0NDX in St. Kilda, Scotland

He will be active as MM0NDX/P from St. Kilda, Scotland, during 24-27 July 2009. This will be a family holiday-style operation from the campsite in Village Bay. St. Kilda is one of the only two-dozen global locations to be awarded "World Heritage Status" for both natural and cultural significance. Col will participate in the 2009 RSGB IOTA Contest (25-26 July). More info and a possible website is forthcoming.

GAREC-2009

The Fifth Global Amateur Radio Emergency Communications (GAREC) Conference will be held on 24-25 August 2009, in connection with the JARL Ham Fair at Tokyo Big Sight, Ariake, Tokyo, Japan. The Japan Amateur Radio League (JARL) hosts the conference. The theme of the GAREC-2009 will be "Emergency Communications across Borders."

14th IARU Region 3 Conference

The conference will be held at Christchurch, 12-16 October 2009. The formal announcements have been made and information sent to all societies from R3 secretariat.

The conference webpage is now up and running.

<http://www.iaru-r3.org/14r3c/14r3c.htm>

Please visit <http://www.zl6iaru.org/> to keep up to date on conference details, including online registrations.

The 2009 Seanet

Seanet 2009 will be held in Seoul, Korea on 23-27 October 2009 at Capital Hotel, Seoul City and Mt. Sorak in Gangwon province, Korea. This will be sponsored by Seoul City and Korea Tourism Organization.

YL Chae HL1KDW, hl2kdw@hotmail.com, is the Chairperson of the Organizing Committee. Details are available at:

http://www.sabah.net.my/seanet/seanet_2009.htm

<http://www.iaru-r3.org/14r3c/14r3c.htm>



AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY OF INDIA

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(Affiliated to the International Amateur Radio Union)*

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12th June 2009,

Dear Fellow Ham,

I know that it has been a long time since you received the Ham Radio News magazine.

Due to some unavoidable circumstances, with the registered office shifting from Mumbai to Bangalore and some formalities to be completed at the office of the Registrar of Newspapers, the regularity of the HRN was badly affected.

Now we have managed to get the newly refurbished issue out. The magazine is now being made up by a professional agency and you can definitely look forward to the regularity of its issues once again.

We also have a new editor T.S. Ganesh, VU2TS, who needs no introduction whatsoever to any ham.

We are making some more changes to the magazine, which will be reflected in the next issue, which will be out on time.

One of the reasons for the issues of the HRN, being irregular is the paucity of participation of the members of ARSI in its publication. So I take this opportunity to invite all of you once again to contribute articles and news items to the HRN. I am sure that with your participation, we will be bringing out a better and more timely HRN. Soft copy submissions are welcome.

Thanks and with best regards

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President, ARSI

K.N. Rajaram
Hon. Secretary, ARSI

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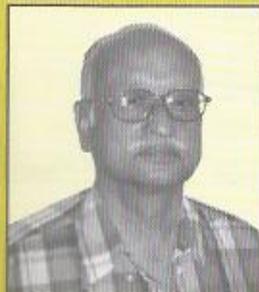
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Message from the President

Dear Members,

I would like to welcome OM Ganesh VU2TS as our new editor for the news magazine of our society and am grateful to Ganesh for having accepted this task. I am sure we can count on contributions from all our members to make this a truly representative magazine on the hobby in India.



I would also take this opportunity to thank Y L Sarla VU2SWS for having done the editor's job for many years.

The past few months have been rather hectic as far as travelling is concerned for me, having had to attend meetings of the Administrative Council of IARU and also the directors' meetings for IARU Region 3. This was followed by the Telecom Asia conference and an exhibition where I was responsible for setting up and looking after the IARU booth. Details on these events are available on the IARU Region 3 webpage: <http://www.iaru-r3.org/>

By the time this issue is released, the hamfest at Gandhinagar

in Gujarat would have been over and many hams from all over India would have had an opportunity for an eyeball and discussions on various subjects of interest to all of us. These hamfests are a great opportunity for meeting friends you made on the air and we have a chance to put a face to a voice and also to make many new friends from all over the country. Kudos to Gujarat Institute of Amateur Radio (GIAR) for having taken on the responsibility of organising this year's event.

I apologise for the fact that we have not been able to bring out any issues of our magazine for the past few months and hope that the magazine will appear at regular intervals hereafter.

My good wishes to you and your families.

73.Gopal VU2GMN

FROM B R HILLSU!

Greetings

It is said that CHANGE is the only thing that's constant.

Y L Sarla VU2SWS having done a great job of editing HRN for the past five years is now pre-occupied with more pressing family and business activities. When the Prez asked me if I can continue the good work, I wasn't sure if I could. There were many reasons.

For starters, I have been under the radar for the past couple of years. I had problem with the rig and then my antenna came down in a storm, and I found that the band conditions weren't hot enough for me to get back on the band in a hurry. Literally out of the world of amateur radio for a while. Where have all the sunspots gone?

And then, being in a rather remote location, I wasn't sure I can gather enough material for the magazine to be published on a regular basis. However, the Prez assured me full co-operation of the members in providing articles as well as the much needed advertisements for the HRN and the Secretary has agreed to get the issues printed and distributed from Bengalooru.



I will be back on the air shortly and I have realized that I need to get the cobwebs and rust off the microphone and give up the tradition of "CW only" which VU2TS was famous for. But you can rest assured that I will always include information on what's going on in the lower end of the HF bands.

Due to the break in publication of Ham Radio News, we are publishing articles which are dated, in the hope that this may still be of interest to our readers. Forthcoming issues will contain current news and articles.

I earnestly request each and every member to forward news, articles, links, home-brew up-dates, club activities and photos, supporting me in continuing the good work.

Ganesh VU2TS, T S Ganesh, Watapi, B R Hills 571 313, ganesh@watapi.com

DATES SET FOR DXPEDITION TO DESECHEO ISLAND



The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has notified a group of hams led by veteran DXpeditioners Bob Allphin K4UEE and Glenn Johnson W0GJ, that they will be able to mount a DXpedition to Desecheo Island (KP5, IOTA NA-095), 12-26 February 2009.

Desecheo currently sits at number 7 on DX Magazine's Most Wanted List. Desecheo is a small uninhabited island in the Mona Passage, 14 miles off the western coast of Puerto Rico. It is part of the USFWS's national wildlife refuge system administered by the Caribbean National Wildlife Refuge Complex (CNWR).

Per USFWS rules, only 15 operators will be allowed on the island at one time. "We have arranged with USFWS to allow a shift change about half way through the DXpedition," Allphin told the ARRL. "This has allowed a number of hams on our waiting list an opportunity to participate in this DXpedition."

Johnson said the team will be running CW, SSB and RTTY on 160-6 metres. "We've had tremendous support from DX

organizations all over the world and from numerous equipment and antenna manufacturers," he told the ARRL. "We are diligently working on the propagation studies to reach our hard to work areas of Asia and Europe. This and with our planned antennas, we should knock Desecheo off the Most Wanted List for a long time to come." Desecheo is the second most-wanted DXCC entity in Asia and third most-wanted in Europe.

According to DXCC Manager Bill Moore, NC1L, the lack of amateur activity on Desecheo is due to the USFWS not issuing the needed Special Use permits. "The USFWS has always claimed safety concerns as a reason for not issuing the permits," he said. "Since the island was used as a bombing range, there is the possibility that unexploded, live munitions are still on the island. It is always a good thing when an entity that had activation difficulties in the past gets on the air again."

On Friday, 19 December three DXpedition team members, USFWS personnel and an unexploded ordnance (UXO) expert will go out to Desecheo to sweep and clear the assigned area of unexploded ordnance and other hazards. "We are uniquely fortunate for a 'sneak preview' of our operating site the week before Christmas," Johnson said. "We will spend a day on

Desecheo clearing hazards from our operating sites. Rarely does such a most-wanted entity have an opportunity for a sneak peak to optimally plan logistics, stations and antennas.” There will be no radio operations on this trip.

The KP5 DXpedition team will assemble in Puerto Rico on Sunday, 8 February for mandatory UXO training. They will spend the next few days training, preparing and staging the several tons of equipment for transport to the site and set out for Desecheo on 12 February. Allphin said that as soon as they land on Desecheo, two stations will be “immediately activated. Stations will continue to operate until the final moments of departure on 28 February.”

Allphin is an experienced DXer, having visited 80 DXCC entities and operated from 40, including Peter I Island, Howland Island, Kingman Reef, the South Sandwich Islands and South Georgia Island. Allphin and Johnson have both participated in DXpeditions to Heard Island and Bhutan.

“For a team leader, the challenges are pretty much the same for Desecheo as they were for Peter I and other remote DXpeditions,” Allphin told the ARRL. “Take logistics — you still

must make sure everything you need gets there. Although there is a Radio Shack 20 miles away, the boat trip is \$1000! The team must be selected on compatibility, experience and operating skills; that never changes. The difference this time is that Glenn and I have been inundated with requests to join the team. The close proximity makes it look like an easy DXpedition, I guess!”

“A well-organized and lengthy operation from Desecheo will be a nice treat for the world’s DXers,” Patton said. “With W0GJ and K4UEE leading the operation, I think we can all count on a first class effort that will give maximum exposure to Asia/Oceania and Europe where KP5 is most needed. I also think that Glenn and Bob can demonstrate to the Fish and Wildlife Service that a DXpedition can take place and not damage the environment or cause big problems amongst other hams or for other agencies. I hope hams will be invited back to Desecheo more frequently in the future and expand the places where hams may operate.”

From www.vu2.in



HOLISTIC HAMS

Amateurs in and around Gurgaon held an Antenna Workshop in February 2008. Here is the tale as related by Rajesh VU2OEC. It is hoped that other clubs and groups will be motivated by this!

When Bharat Balsavar VU2BDX was away in Sri Lanka – Pearl of the Indian Ocean – on a morning QTH trip, two Gurgaon hams Atanu VU2ATN and Rajesh VU2OEC were planning for the probable Ham Picnic somewhere in the nearby oldest mountain range in the world – The Aravallis (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aravalli_Range).



As talk of ham picnic was in the air on 2-metre –

145.200 MHz – the NCR Simplex Net Frequency, VU2BDX returned from Sri Lanka eager to be back on radio. The plot for ham picnic started weaving vigorously amongst the NCR hams on the Delhi Repeater, VU2DLR (Freq.145.600 MHz with -600 kHz shift). No doubt, it could not be just a picnic. The idea of a Workshop for J-pole finally got the nod from everyone and many came forward for active participation. Confirmations came in repeatedly on the radio for Sunday, 24 February 2008 – the D-day for the event.

VU2BDX – Member, Governing Body, ARSI and VU2OEC,

Regional Representative of ARSI for Gurgaon explored three spots in the wilderness of the Aravali hills. The Haryana Tourism Resorts at Sohna Hot Water Springs and Damdama Lake – both exorbitantly high priced – could not match the charms, scenic location and economy of Bhuvaneshwari Temple Complex, Bhondsi, on the outskirts of Gurgaon. The temple is nestled in the hills full of flora and fauna

like trees and herbal plants including a sandalwood tree, peacocks, Nilgai (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nilgai>), parrots, squirrels and a small lake too.

Perfect place for camping or field day. Swamiji of the temple readily assented to our request for the J-Pole workshop in the temple area and blessed us with few other bonuses of wooden benches, carpets, etc. Above all, they also provided drinking water, tea and lunch for 32 persons. What else would one want.

The techie group VU2UKR and VU2GTI experimented with a prototype in their shacks, took readings, size of the copper pipe

needed as there was demand of Nine J-pole antennae. Later, it turned out there were many more aspirants!

All set, plans for J-pole floated on the regular VU2DLR VHF net at 21:30 hrs.

Suddenly, the activity on 2-metre sprung with many more check-ins day-by-day and lot many eavesdropping about the ham picnic talks. Frank VU2XLZ, Sunil VU2UKR and Gaurav VU2GTI took command for the technical plot of the show. Rajani VU3CAV too joined them and was kind enough to organize the copper tubing and bending tools for the copper pipe. Khalid VU3SYP, a novice badly needed an antenna as he regularly joined the net from the terrace of his house in the chilling cold winter.

In the early morning mist of Sunday, 24 February 2008, a convoy of 10 cars with more than 25 hams, 3 XYLs and 2 harmonics all loaded to the teeth with equipment and snacks were on the Gurgaon-Sohna Highway enjoying the road show.

Old timers Kumar VU2XD with Veena XYL-VU2BMY, Balawant VU2BSB with XYL were also among the group with Sri VU2OB with XYL + Harmonic. SWLOB Yashasvi harmonic of VU2BDX being a science student too enjoyed every moment of the workshop-cum-ham picnic. The President of Radio Taipei International Listeners' Club for Delhi, Mr. Alokesh Gupta – an ardent shortwave listener, could not stop himself from joining us.

The moment the ham contingent left the highway and quietly rolled into the hilly winding roads, everyone enjoyed the greenery, peacocks, geese in the lake and finally the temple – the base of ham activity. Swamiji greeted us and gave us the sweet prasad after the darshanam. Hams filled with holistic feelings rose to unwrap the final plot – the J-pole Workshop.

VU2BSB – the senior most ham - inaugurated the event by cutting open the copper pipe package. Half-a-dozen hams clicked their cameras and rolled their camcorders documenting the event. VU2UKR – the Antenna Man – was seriously busy in technical photography step-by-step. Everyone came forward and whole-

heartedly participated in straightening the copper pipe, taking measurements, cutting and bending of pipe. Ashish VU2ANM – an experienced home brewer and Naval Officer – let everyone use his tools and car battery for the purpose. VU2XLZ was kind enough to bring the MFJ-249B Antenna Analyzer – the state of the art test meter, which proved to be a boon in the final testing. Everyone held the breadth as Sofi VU2KD deftly took the measurements. After a few adjustments, the SWR reading came to 1:1.

As the Workshop was on, to our surprise, Ashok VU2ASB along with Rahul VU2YK also joined us as they were monitoring our plans in daily nets. After the first J-pole was tested the temple



workers invited us for lunch, which was served to us in biodegradable leaf plates – all hams sat together in a row and ate to their heart's fill, eyes filled with joy. VU2OB, Sandeep VU2MUE and Sunil VU2UCC departed for some good reason back to Delhi.

In the 2nd half, about nine J-pole antennae were fabricated during the workshop and proudly distributed to the needy

hams. During the workshop, VU2UKR pointed to many do's and don'ts pertaining to managing the coaxial cable, connectors, antenna. To celebrate the success hams trekked up to the topmost point on the nearest hill and waved their J-poles. VU3SYP too excited with new antenna climbed the abandoned watch post (20 feet high) without any ladder. Here it is important to mention the presence of two dogs who befriended us while monitoring our each and every move.

During the descent from the top holding the J-pole antenna, the prize of the day, looked like a Vijay Yatra with music of natural surroundings, warm soothing breeze, flutter of leaves, chirping birds, bells of cows amidst the presence of Swamiji and other holy men. The fulfillment and contentment was visible in the whole team – the hams.

Other participating hams were Ray VU3ORN, Raman VU2DJQ, Ashok VU2AKW, Teertha VU2TPR, Gyan U3GPZ and Uttam VU3KUL.

The Coimbatore Amateur Radio Club held their 8th VHF Fox hunt on 12th October 2008



Ram VU3DRC is flagging off the event. Krish VU3NKK is watching



Prize distribution

The “Fox” team included VU2DVP, VU2RTF and VU2KSJ. After a month's preparation the fox-hunt was on at 8 AM on 12 October, when the fox-hunters were briefed and the hunt was flagged off at 9.00 AM. There were 18 teams participating.

The Fox was located 20 km southwest of Coimbatore, amidst a windmill farm.

This time around, no efforts were made to “hide” the fox – instead, the fox sat in a parked Jeep and relaxed. Several hunters passed by, not noticing the Jeep with the fox in it!

However, around 10.20 hrs the team led by VU2IBHM called “TALLY-HO” and by 11.15 all the teams zeroed in on the spot.

Prize distribution and lunch were arranged at the nearby Karivardhan Speedway, L.G. Sports grounds.

TNX VU2KSJ for the report, VU2RTF for photos.



Vidi VU2DVP with the participating teams



Krish VU3NKK taking a bearing in the hunt



The Fox Vidi VU2DVP, Balu VU2RTF and Raja VU2KSJ along with other hams in the Fox Hole.

Islands on the Air



The IOTA Programme was created by Geoff Watts, a leading British shortwave listener, in the mid-1960s. When it was taken over by the RSGB in 1985 it had already become for some a favourite award. Its popularity grows each year and it is highly regarded among amateurs world-wide.

The IOTA Programme consists of 18 separate awards. They may be claimed by any licensed radio amateur eligible under the General Rules, who can produce evidence of having made two-way communication, since 15 November 1945, with the required number of amateur radio stations located on the islands, both world-wide and regional. Many of the islands are DXCC countries in their own right; others are not, but by meeting particular eligibility criteria also count for credit. Part of the fun of IOTA is that it is an evolving programme with new islands being activated for the first time (from amongst the 1170 listed groups).

The basic award is for working stations located on 100 islands / groups. There are higher achievement awards for working 200, 300, 400, 500, 600 and 700 islands/groups. In addition there are seven continental awards (including Antarctica) and three regional awards - Arctic Islands, British Isles and West Indies - for contacting a specified number of islands/groups listed in each area. The IOTA World-wide diploma is available for working 50% of the numbered groups

in each of the seven continents. A Plaque of Excellence is available for confirmed contacts with at least 750 islands/groups. Shields are available for every 25 further islands/groups.

The rules require that in order for credit to be given, QSL cards need to be submitted to nominated IOTA checkpoints for checking.

A feature of the IOTA Programme is the annual Honour Roll which appears in the RSGB's DX News Magazine and which encourages continual updating of scores. This also appears in the July edition of RadCom and on this website [to be published in July].

If 'Island Chasing' appeals to you (and it can become compulsive!), you will need the latest IOTA Directory and Yearbook which is packed with information on the awards, the honour roll, a 'most-wanted islands list' and the essential world-wide list of islands.

For full info

<http://www.rsgbiota.org/>

Further info: My research shows that the total number of ISLANDS around the world is around 18,000.

-The Editor

MEMBERSHIP

Membership Category	Admission Fees (Rs.)	Annual Fees (Rs.)
Patron	15,000 & above	
Life Member	4,000	Nil
Corporate Member	50	1,000
Corporate (Club, Society or Institution with Licence)	50	1,000

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All payments to be made by draft in the name of ARSI payable at Bangalore. Money Order can be sent to the correspondence address. No payments by cheques please.

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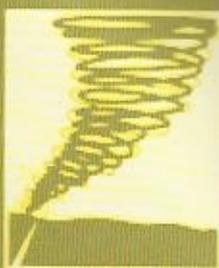
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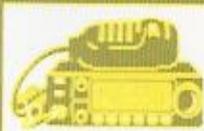
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WHEN
ALL
ELSE
FAILS...



AMATEUR
RADIO



Astronomers who count sunspots have announced that 2008 is now the "blankest year" of the space age.

As of 1 October 2008, the sun had been blank, i.e., had no visible sunspots, on 204 days of the year. To find a year with more blank suns, we need to go back to 1954, three years before the launch of Sputnik, when the sun was blank for 241 days.

All of us know that there is a correlation between sunspots and propagation conditions. Sunspots are dark regions on the surface of the sun, which are relatively cooler than surrounding areas. They occur when the lines of the sun's magnetic field becomes twisted. There are more sunspots when the sun is "active", producing more radiation which can affect the earth's ionosphere.

The F layer of the ionosphere is caused mostly by ultraviolet radiation from the sun. During the times of high solar activity, the resulting higher ionization levels in the F layer allow higher frequencies to be reflected. For example, around the solar maximum, the 10 metre band (28 to 30 MHz) is frequently open for extended periods of time, and long distances can be worked with rather low power levels.

The Maunder Minimum

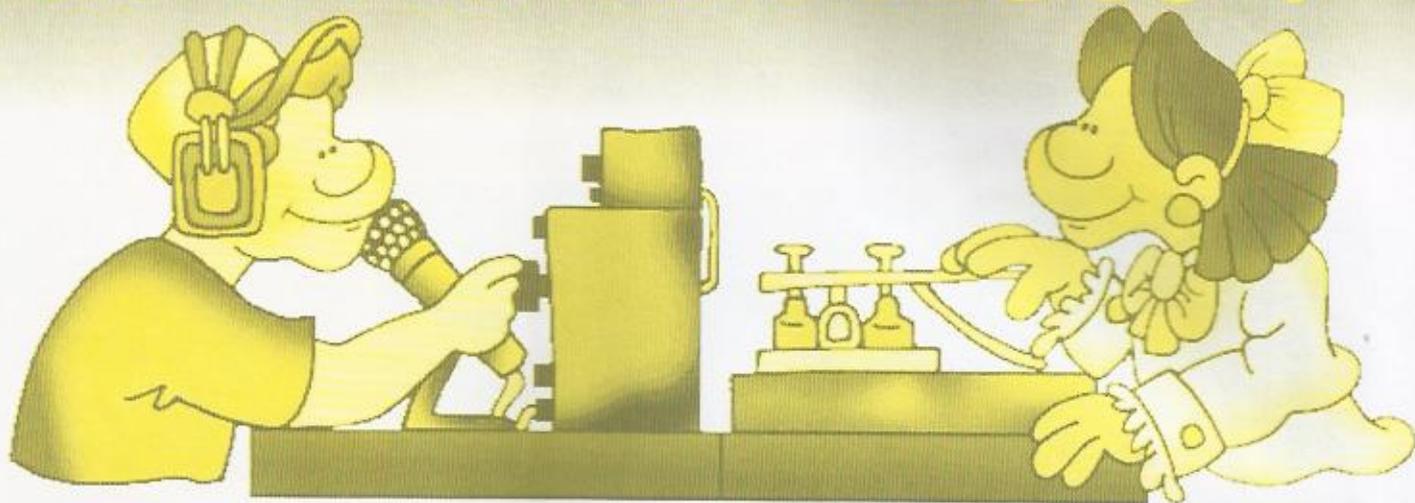
Early records of sunspots indicate that the sun went through a period of inactivity in the late 17th century. Very few sunspots were

seen on the sun from about 1645 to 1715. Although the observations were not as extensive as in later years, the sun was in fact well observed during this time and this lack of sunspots is well documented. There is evidence that the sun has had similar periods of inactivity in the more distant past. Sunspot counts now at a 50-year low, we are experiencing a deep minimum of the solar cycle. And it is a very quiet time. If solar activity continues to be as low as it has been, this year may add up to 290 spotless days by the end of December, making it a century-level year in terms of spotlessness.

The sunspot activity is of great importance to anyone involved in HF radio communications. The level of sunspot activity has an enormous effect on the ionosphere and hence on HF radio propagation conditions. Therefore, even a superficial understanding is advantageous to radio amateurs.



Is HAM RADIO as hot as it was ? Or is it obsolete ?



I remember, after reading an article in the POPULAR SCIENCE way back in the 50s, I was thrilled that radio amateurs could converse with others around the world using their own, private radio stations. For me, with no tech-savvy, it was something out of a fairy tale. I pursued the matter, and after years of search (read as struggle) and swing, got my own ticket in 1965. Not many hams in India those days - my licence number is 350.

Now, no one seems to be thrilled with the prospect of chatting with people all over the world. Oh! They now have cell phones for chatting with friends and the Internet for chatting with friends and relatives all over the world. Why, we were handling the traffic for the Motor Rallies all along, not any more. They have cell phones!

I talked on this subject in the Hamfest held at Mysore (now Mysooru) in 1997 and had concluded that the introduction of the Internet and cell phones could only eliminate the casually interested people from pursuing this great hobby but the thrill is always there for the technically minded. For instance, after the advent of the helicopter, people could probably land on top of mountains, but still there are mountain climbers who risk their lives climbing mountains. Why? I guess it's the thrill and adventure that still excite certain people.

It's the same with amateur radio. The thrill - the science - and for the home-brewer, the sense of achievement of having built his own station; all this contributes to the sustaining interest in amateur radio.

We had put up a big show in Bangalore - RADIO 90 - with an exhibition and demonstrations of amateur radio. This evinced interest in thousands of people who registered for ham radio classes leading to a licence. I'm sure many of them are now active hams, probably reading this. However, a repeat of RADIO 90 may not work now. We need to change our approach if we are to popularize this great hobby.

We need to focus on the public's interests instead of our own. We have always demonstrated by putting up HF and VHF stations and talking to other hams, using jargon, but this is now passe'. We need to focus on more modern technology - like interfacing computers and radio. These days the buzzword is "DIGITAL". The high-pressure consumer marketing carried out by the local media has trained everyone to listen when they hear that magic word "DIGITAL". I won't be surprised if someone comes up with a Digital Safety Pin. Jokes aside, we can exploit all that attention to promote the hobby.

Friends who never took a second look at my humble station were awed when they saw I was tracking the ISS and the SPACE

SHUTTLE on SATSCAPE during one of the STS missions, tuning the downlink frequencies to see if anything is heard. Both the spacecrafts were clearly seen on the monitor sailing over South India. They wanted to know more, and I told them about ARISS and how every astronaut/cosmonaut is a licenced ham. (I don't know if the Taikonauts are, too). They were impressed.

We need to enliven our hobby with the latest innovations in technology and operations, making ourselves more relevant in a world flooded with communications. Contrary to popular belief, amateur experimentation is going on as strong as ever. There are many innovations in the field of communication, nearly all of them invented by hams, but sadly their use is not adopted by us. At the same time they are finding commercial applications.

Last but not the least, if we continue treating amateur radio as "just another hobby", our spectrum may be re-allocated to other users. Amateur radio has always been a "public service" but in the 21st century it appears as though the "public" do not need our "services" any more! Therefore, we need to try bring it back to its original uniqueness.

We need to put our heads together, so I welcome suggestions from readers as to how best we can retain the general public's interest in this great hobby of ours.

Ganesh VU2TS



I.T.U. ZONES AND REGIONS

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