

New ham newsletter floated on sea of controversy!

by *Hambone Staff*

Just in time for the new year, a new ham newsletter has appeared on the scene. Called *Hambone*, it claims to be "The Alternative Ham Newsletter".

The fact that it is not affiliated with any club or dealer makes this reporter wonder about the sanity of the publisher, Neil VE3PUE. How will it be distributed? Who will read it? In fact, who will write for it?

One of the major disadvantages faced by *Hambone*, is that it is published on an irregular basis, making it virtually impossible for them to carry any time-sensitive material. Advertising would seem to be out of the question, since the advertisers would never know when their material would appear.

The publisher claims that these are not problems, but "concealed opportunities". He says that there are plenty of hams who are not members of any club (known as *hams without clubs* or HWCs), and they would be glad to have a newsletter.

Since there is no club affiliations, *Hambone* is not obliged to publish budgets, proposals of motions, notices for upcoming meetings, minutes of past meetings, revisions of proposals of motions, corrections to previous minutes, irate letters to the editor complaining about errors in the minutes, or messages from various club honchos. (This alone will garner a wide readership, claims the publisher.)

When pressed about the haphazard schedule, the publisher replied somewhat testily that "We'll publish an issue whenever we damn well feel like it, and not a moment sooner. But if you print that I'll deny it, so just say we publish whenever our limited resources permit us to do so."

[Make sure you clean this quote up before this goes to press. Ed.]

Supposedly there is no shortage of material for future issues (if they ever appear), since there are plenty of HWCs with things to say. The publisher claims that there are lots of non-HWCs who would like to publish something outside their club newsletter.

Sharp-eyed readers have undoubtedly realized that Neil VE3PUE is the former editor of the *Rambler*, the club newsletter of the OVMRC. He has received several pointed queries about this new venture that all boil down to: "Why not edit the *Rambler* again?" The prime reason seems to be that the *Rambler* has a perfectly capable editor in the person of Dan Doctor VE3XDD. In addition, the *Rambler* has the nasty habit of appearing every month, and Neil has a distinct aversion to such a regular schedule.

The publisher is also vigorously denying the flurry of rumors to the effect that *Hambone* is the new Club Not! newsletter. It is hard to know what to believe when a club that does not want to exist is linked with a newsletter that is not supposed to be linked to... Well, you get the idea. We suspect that this mixture of rumor and speculation is an attention-seeking attempt to boost circulation. Will *Hambone* survive? Stay tuned.

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Top 10 reasons to read Hambone

10. Low in cholesterol
9. Low in fat-saturated articles
8. Completely minutes-of-last-meeting free
7. Only four pages long, easier to read than others
6. Printed on genuine paper, a natural product
5. Completely notice-of-motion free
4. Has top 10 list in every issue (so far)
3. Not affiliated with club full of geeks like me
2. More fun than any other ham newsletter
... and the number 1 reason to read *Hambone* ...
1. Editor refuses to capitalize "amateur radio"

Inside this issue

- OVMRC Prez fest
- Filter party
- Ham Club Not!
- Capital punishment

Upcoming issues:

- Improving Ham Vocabulary
- Construction Projects
- and much much more ...

Hambone

Hambone is published by:
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Subscriptions
Hambone is free, but unfortunately Canada Post charges 43¢ to deliver each issue. Additional donations to help defray the cost of printing are always welcome. Don't send any more than \$5, we'll come begging when we need more. Since *Hambone* is published sporadically, readers who are camped beside their super mailboxes waiting for the next issue are advised to lay in a good supply of beef jerky and long underwear.

Submissions
Submissions of all sorts are welcome – they don't even have to be about ham radio. Text is only accepted on 3.5 inch disks.

OVMRC Prez fest!

The OVMRC has held their sixth semi-annual presidential election, and once again Jerry VE3CDS has been elected Prez. The OVMRC constitution does not allow the VP to ascend to the throne in the place of the

Prez, it requires that an election be held within 60 days to fill the vacancy. Over the past three years the presidents have been Jeff VE3RCI, Jerry VE3CDS, Bob VE3YBC, Jerry VE3CDS, Jerry VE3CDS, and Jerry VE3CDS.



Jerry VE3CDS, world's most popular club president

Photo: VE3PUE

Filter party

If you are one of those poor unfortunates plagued by intermod on 2m, the Club Not filter building party may be just what the doctor ordered.

Come to the engineering building at Carleton U. at 9 o'clock on Saturday January 15, 1994. Bring \$20 to cover the cost of parts (and maybe a few bucks more for other stuff). All tools, materials, and instructions will be provided. All the action will be captured on video for subsequent release at a theatre near you.

When you leave you will be the proud owner and builder of a working filter (or a lovely piece of abstract art).



Rumors

We have been unable to confirm the rumor that ISC (or DOC, or whatever they are this year) is going to require bilingual CW identifiers on 2m repeaters. This was supposed to have been originally proposed by the office in New Brunswick, Canada's only officially bilingual province. However, repeater operators near the US border complained that our southern neighbors would find the practice confusing. There was also the problem of deciding which language would be broadcast first. Alternating the identifiers every half hour would require extensive modifications to some controllers.



Headstrong hams create curious club!

Recently a group of Ottawa area hams decided to form a club that didn't have the usual trappings – no executive, no formal meetings, no minutes, no newsletter. Hey! It's not a club at all! The following text – extracted from a bulletin posted on a local BBS – may help to explain...

Ham Club Not!

by Wil Warren VE3XMT

Ham Club Not! is a concept born out of the frustration of dealing with people who prefer to argue politics than discuss amateur radio activities – either at existing club meetings or on the air. A couple of weeks ago, I had one of those inspired moments and thought “wouldn't it be nice to have get-togethers where the people attending discussed antennas, logic circuits, microphones, tubes, tuning devices, radio repair, signal propagation?” (all the things that make amateur radio interesting to those of us who can be considered technocrats).

So I looked around and saw all was not good. The solution, of course, was to form a new club – but with a difference. The prime goal of the club and its members is to NOT! organize in any usual way and to avoid the bureaucracy that we all deal with daily.

The way to achieve this is to focus on building and designing for amateur radio. This means doing things and NOT! organizing others to do things. This concept is not new. It is similar to Libertarian Anarchism.

[I suppose these guys will be practicing yogic flying, too. Ed.]

In considering whether this could work, I looked at existing groups where those with the greatest skills are called upon to do the most – exactly the

scenario I hate. What we need to do is apply the principle of enlightened self-interest.

If someone can convince me that their idea is better than mine or more worthy of pursuit than mine, then I *may* decide to support their efforts – but it had better be a good idea! If not, good luck somewhere else. If we all adopt this approach things will work quite well and “organizers” will not only stay out of the crowd but they will be left spinning their wheels (I wish we could do this to politicians in general).

Here are the answers to some questions I've thought of (you can add your own):

1. What direction will the club take? Whichever direction those of us who do the work choose to take.

2. Who will be the leaders? The best answer to this question is “Who will be the the followers?” Those who like to lead others may find their ideas less than appealing to those of us with our own views. Those who choose to follow can still work in a support capacity provided the efforts produce tangible results. If it's not worth doing for all concerned it's not worth doing.

3. What about the club's organization? The idea is to *avoid* the bureaucracy. The moment someone tries to organize the club members into some more recognizable group, I'll be gone – probably to start up another club (grin).

[Strictly speaking, there are no members to organize, so this may take care of itself. Ed.]

4. How will we get things done? By the participants deciding amongst themselves to get things done (and what to do).

5. Won't this be an inefficient way of doing things? That depends on your definition of efficiency. I defy anyone to tell

me I'm inefficient in enjoying my hobby!

6. This sounds great – but it won't work! Maybe it won't work for you but it's already working for me.

7. How do I join? Joining isn't the issue. Get interested in something and read about it, try some things, solder a connection, build something, and you'll be a member before you know it.

8. What should I do? If you're in this position, I encourage you to join a ham club with a more recognizable power structure because Club Not! won't appeal to you.

9. Are you looking for ideas? Nope! We've already got lots of our own.

10. What you should do is... Stop right there! We are not interested in shoulds.

11. What will I get out of this if I join? If you have to ask this question then you can't join!

[Not to flog a dead horse, but we thought nobody could join.]

12. What do you get out of this? Exactly what you put in!

13. I like the idea, but I can't think of anything I could do. That's OK, but listen on the air, look in magazines, and read some books to get some ideas, then try them on your own. Try and fail, or try and succeed, but try, then come and join the club!

For more information on Club Not! contact Wil VE3XMT on the air or write to:

PO Box 6492 Station J
Ottawa, ON
Canada K2A 3Y6

If you are computer literate and have a modem, try the BBS at (613) 836-5889. It runs on a 9600 HST dual standard modem.

[Hambone is not associated with Club Not!, but we are glad to publish articles for them.

Ed.]

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Capital punishment: CW = continuous whining

by Neil Herber VE3PUE

It's bad enough living in the National Capital Region (home of the Senators and House of Commons) without having to endure the ravings of the lunatic fringe over the merits of CW.

The most recent wave of foolishness was unleashed when Bob Calver VE3UUH wrote an article in the November 1993 *Rambler*. Anyone who took the time to actually read the article could easily see that it was quite a good-humored poke at the "rock-bangers" – people who insist that CW is the be all and end all of amateur radio. Bob made several worthwhile suggestions, including opening up limited parts of the HF spectrum to operators with 5wpm CW.

All of this seems to have been lost in the ensuing hubbub on the air. The 2m repeaters were assaulted by gumflappers pontificating about the grand traditions of amateur radio that would be lost if CW licensing was ever changed. One individual I heard actually said that the CW requirement "helped keep the riff-raff off the HF bands". I guess that means the riff-raff are confined above 30MHz, which is probably a great relief to anyone who has happened across 14.313 MHz on a good night.

The December issue of the *Rambler* featured three letters to the editor which were less than supportive of Bob's position.

The first writer seemed to concentrate his energies on calling Bob names (pompous, pedantic, kindly, enlightened, paternalistic, doomsday, old buddy, and Aristotle) rather than discussing his ideas. He also implied that Bob wanted to cremate all CW operators – something that was lost on me when I read the original article. He concluded that Bob "has some

good ideas ... [which] ... should be debated intelligently" but gave no hint as to how this might be accomplished.

The second writer was apparently unfamiliar with satiric writing, which often requires exaggeration to make a point. He felt that people who thought they needed a two-mile antenna should be banished to the CB bands. He also thought that executives of radio clubs should have at least 5wpm code. I was on the PARC executive for a year and have been on the OVMRC executive for several years and never found the lack of code to be a hindrance. Finally the second writer revealed that only radio below 30MHz is "authentic radio". (A lot of people have been doing a good job faking it above 30 megs.)

The third writer took a more moderate approach than the others, and on balance his letter was positive, saying "let's not throw the baby out with the bath water". However, he dragged up that old chestnut that insists that CW is the most reliable method because it is so low-tech (straight key).

He mentioned electronic keyers, computer generated morse, and satellite communications but said they were subject to technical failures. I'm willing to bet that most operators send CW on a fully synthesized HF rig, controlled by a microprocessor, with a fluorescent alphanumeric display, and an automatic antenna tuner. And although I often hear people complaining about propagation on the HF bands, I have never heard a complaint about satellite propagation.

The *Rambler* doesn't have a stranglehold on the CW debate – the last umpteen issues of *The Canadian Amateur* have featured a series of letters –

some proposing changes to the CW requirements and others predicting the downfall of civilization as we know it if the requirements change.

I'm willing to bet that the only reason that ISC requires CW for HF operations is that it is part of the ITU treaty that Canada has signed. Most commercial traffic that made use of HF CW has moved to those unreliable satellites. Soon the only place CW will be active is on the amateur bands. As many writers have said, let's keep CW (lots of people enjoy it) but drop it as a mandatory item as soon as possible.

Nobody seems to object to people who cannot operate a standard shift being given a driver's license. Blasphemy! The standard shift is an important landmark in the history of the automobile. A car with a standard shift gets better gas mileage and is more reliable than these new-fangled automatics. Making people learn how to shift will keep the riff-raff off the road.

Learning to drive on a standard shift is more difficult than on an automatic, but a license to operate a lethal hunk of iron hurtling along at 100 kph shouldn't be easy to get. If people don't have to work for their license, they won't appreciate it, and they will abuse the privileges that it grants them.

Perhaps we should have different levels of licenses – when you get your basic level, you can drive on highways with numbers above 30. After you have shown your proficiency at driving a team of horses hitched to a surrey, you will be allowed full privileges, able to drive on all roads. And you will be welcomed with open arms to the wonderful fraternity of amateur automobiling!

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