

W7OEK

Volume 2009, Issue 10 **October 2009**

Herb Grey	W7MMI	773-4765		President
Don Bennett	KG7BP	618-5189		Vice President
Lud Sibley	KB2EVN	855-5207		Treasurer
Jack Schock	WA7IHU	535-8471		Secretary
Tom McDermott	N5EG	734-4675	n5eg@tapr.org	Newsletter and Membership
Dave Basden	W7OQ		dave@basden.us	Webmaster
Club Web Page:		http://www.qsl.net/w7oek		

Next Club Meeting
Thursday, October 1, 2009. 7:00 PM
Red Cross Building, 60 Hawthorne St., Medford, OR
Across from Hawthorne Park
Program: Soundcards for Amateur Radio, Tom McDermott, N5EG

President's Letter

The next Club meeting is October first. The main program will be Tom McDermott, N5EG on 'Soundcards for Amateur Radio'. The program will provide a background on soundcards, the 4 main categories of applications, and performance considerations for some of the applications.

In addition, Don Montgomery, WB7Q, the Jackson County ARES director, will bring us up to date on what is happening with that organization.

The Club will be looking for a few good men during the next month. First I will recruit an officer nominating committee (yes, it's that time already.) When you are contacted prior to the November meeting, please accept a position to help lead the Club in 2010. Also I plan to make time for preliminary discussion

(Continued on page 2)

Secretary's Report

RVARC MINUTES OF THE 3 Sept 09 MEETING

1. The meeting was called to order by Herb Grey W7MMI at 1905L, at the Red Cross Building in Medford, OR

Guests: Dan Bell.

2. Van Sias K7VS introduced our guest speaker Jim Fenstermaker, K9JF and his wife Shirley, W7SAF. He is ARRL's Northwest Division Director. He gave a nice presentation on "what is the future of amateur radio."

3. 1955L Herb adjourned the club for coffee and donuts.

4. 2005L Herb called the meeting back into

(Continued on page 2)

President's Letter, Continued

relative to changing the Club station call, as I brought up in last month's newsletter.

73, Herb, W7MMI

ps: I have copies of the RTTY Journal for mid 1960s to 1970s, plus Digital Journals for mid-1990s — free for the taking.

Two Meter Repeater Frequency

In order to provide a common place to find fellow RVARC club members on two meters, we recommend using the K7RPT 147.62 / 02 repeater as a calling and monitoring frequency. This is an open repeater (no tone or PL access required). The repeater listens on 147.62 MHz and transmits on 147.02 MHz.

Secretary's Report, Continued

session.

5. Jack WA7IHU reading of last month's minutes was suspended, They were approved with two name corrections, Herb Grey and Mike Bach's names where misspelled.
6. Lud KB2EVN told us the club treasury has a balance of \$1998.25.
7. Old Business:
 - A) Nothing was brought up.
8. New Business:

Don Bennett KG7BP announced that there will be ham exams at the "DOM" on the third Saturday in October be there at 0830L
9. Herb adjourned the meeting at 2045L

Submitted by Jack Schock, WA7IHU secretary.

Upcoming Amateur VE Exams

Both the RVARC and the Southern Oregon ARC (SOARC in Grants Pass) will have amateur examination sessions later this year.

RVARC Examination Session

Date: 24 October 2009, 8:30 AM (Walk-ins allowed).

Contact: HARRY J EKELUND, (541)282-0854, HEKELUND@EARTHLINK.NET

Location: VA DOMICILIARY-BLDG, 223 CRATER LAKE HWY -ROUTE 62, 2ND FLR NORTH (VA HAM RADIO RM, WHITE CITY, OR 97504

Bring ID, \$15 check or money order, and proof of license or exam elements passed.

SOARC Examination Session

Date: 20 November 2009, 6:30 PM (Walk-ins allowed).

Contact: WILLIAM A TYNER, (541)476-2703, GOODGRENDL@GMAIL.COM

Location: FRUITDALE GRANGE, 960 ROGUE RIVER HWY, GRANTS PASS, OR 97526

Bring ID, \$15 check or money order, and proof of license or exam elements passed.

Fall Propagation

In theory, spring and fall are good times for HF propagation for working DX. The noisy summertime conditions and long days give way to cooler weather, fewer thunderstorms, and evening conditions that improve the ionosphere. Simultaneously, in the southern hemisphere, short days give way to longer hours of daylight, and the net result is that the trans-equatorial MUF is about the best

that it gets during any time of the year.

One glitch in the theory is that some sunspots are still needed to get things moving along, and solar cycle 24 has not been very good. Long strings of zero-sunspot days have continued well past the time of the solar minimum, and the counts should have started increasing about 6 months ago.

The lack of spots has primarily hindered short-range communication on HF (out to about 500 miles) on 20, 40, and 80 meters. However this time of year, it also makes the 10 and 15 meter band openings pretty rare, and we may not see any real good long-distance openings to the southern hemisphere on those bands.

20 meters should be the workhorse band during the low sunspot numbers, and for intercontinental DX during the fall season.

If the bands are too poor, it maybe a good time to put up a 160 meter antenna to fill in the lack of close in propagation on 80 and 40 meters. 160 will typically support 500 mile paths even during the worst part of the sunspot cycle, because 1.8 MHz is below the critical usable frequency, which dips down into the 2—2.5 MHz range at the worst of the sunspot cycle. The high attenuation that 160 meters suffers can be absent when the MUF is very low, and so this is likely to be the best time in years to operate on top band.

One item unique to 160 meters is the value of a receive-only antenna. On most HF bands we use the same antenna for transmit and receive. But on 160, antennas are too small to have a good pattern, and so specially designed receive antennas can provide directivity. These antennas are normally very lossy, so sometimes a receive preamp is needed, but the directionality of the antenna helps to reject off-axis noise and improve the signal to noise ratio. It can thus pull the weak signals out of the noise.

(Continued on page 6)

Back up that Computer!

I recently had a hard-disk drive crash. The 40 Gig drive was about 8 years old, and had a tremendous accumulation of information, files, and other irreplaceable ham-radio related information, software, and other items. Unfortunately the failure was silent, total, and instantly complete, so there was no warning that it was approaching. Sometimes the bearings will start to whine on the drive before it fails, but not in this case.

In the last 3 months due to being rather busy, I had neglected to continue to backup the hard drive. Fortunately, a complete backup was done about a year ago, and some quarterly partial backups were done in the interim. Those backups helped avoid a catastrophic loss of information, but still some important things were lost in the meantime.

I think the RVARC club membership database has been put right, but only because several emails were found that are stored on a web server rather than the computer itself, a few jogs of memory filled in the missing pieces.

There are several ways to do a back up, and one that is used frequently is to use a USB memory stick to store files. This technique is used to save incremental project updates on computer software development, databases, and anything you want to save.

However, for more extensive coverage, the USB stick is not large enough, nor is the process of identifying what to back up very easy. Less frequently, more thorough backups can be made to a large external hard disk drive. The price of these has dropped a lot in the last 18 months, and 500Gig through 1.5 terabyte USB 2.0 drives can be had in the \$100 range. These drives usually have a power cube and a USB connection to the computer. A few of the newer drives use

so little power that they can actually be powered through the USB interface itself avoiding even a power cube connection. Some people just install a second internal drive for backup, and that's a good approach as well.

One key requirement is to have a good backup program. Windows 2000 came with a good backup program. Windows XP actually has that same program available, but it's not installed by default during the operating system setup. The Windows XP installation CDROM does however have the program on it, and you can install it on your XP computer pretty quickly.

1. Locate your Windows XP operating system installation / reinstallation CDROM.
2. After You have booted up Windows XP, insert the CDROM and stop any attempt for it to autostart or reinstall the operating system.
3. Open up the CDROM using whatever file navigator you normally use, and navigate to the CD drive folder:
drive:\\VALUEADD\MFST\NTBACKUP and double click the program Ntbackup.msi. This will install the NTBACKUP utility onto your computer.
4. The utility will show up in Start-> All Programs-> Accessories-> System Tools-> backup.

You can define a backup set (which tells the program what you want to backup) and a destination where to place the backup data set. The backup utility will compress and pack all the files, folders, paths, and other information into a single file (usually a rather large file).

Weekly backups (well, when I remembered to do them and had time) were on the USB stick, where copies older than a few months could be purged to reclaim space. Recently,

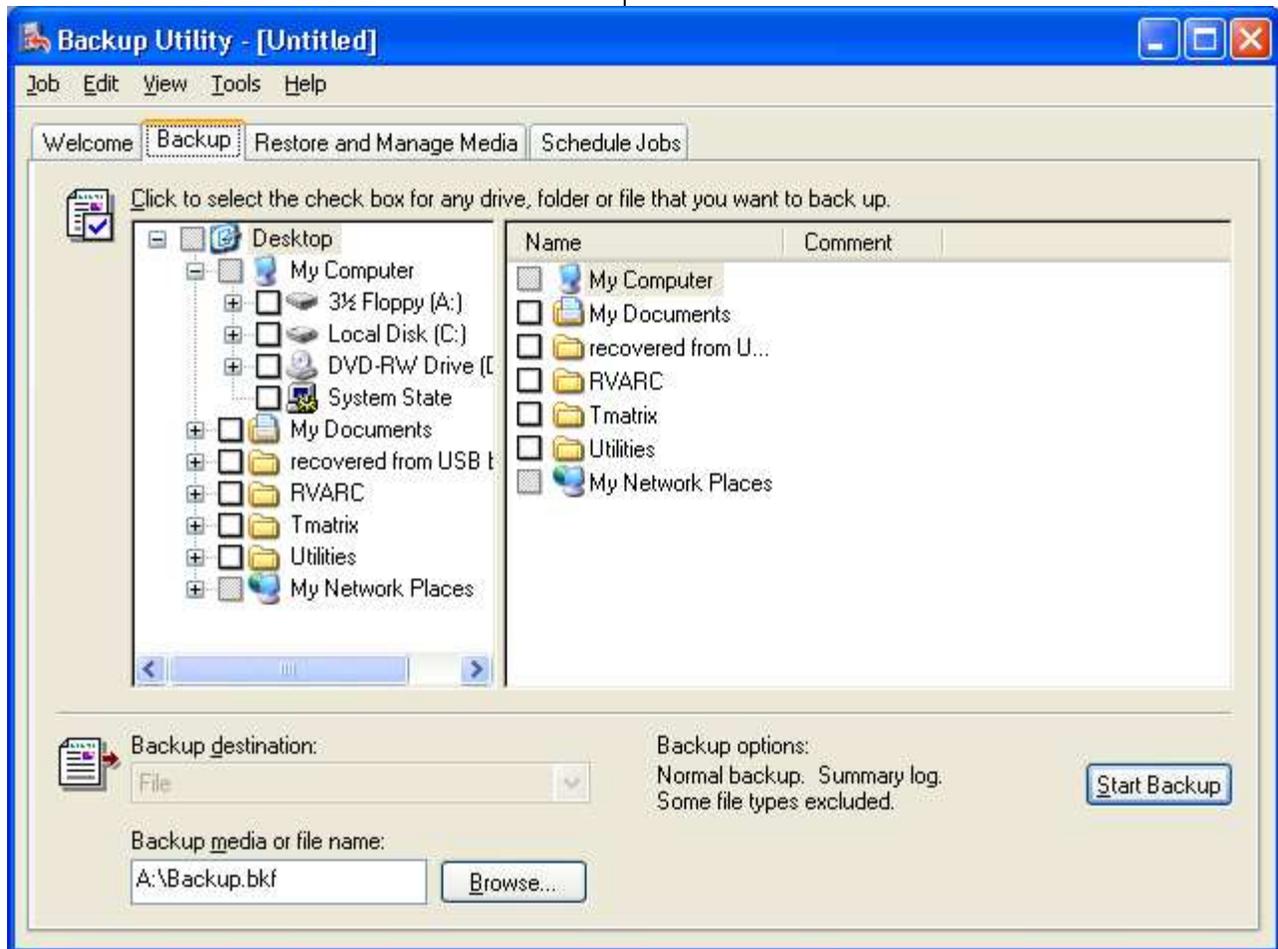
(Continued on page 5)

Back up, Continued.

USB memory sticks have also increased in size into the 16G to 64G range, but the larger ones are still a bit pricy for me.

The NT backup utility allows selective restoration, including restoring files to a different destination than from where they were originally saved. For development tools, it's not

use the wizard for backup, you can also manually select all the parameters. The screenshot shows the backup tab, it looks like a File Explorer page, with checkboxes next to the files and folders. You select what you want to backup from the panes. Checking a folder will automatically select all the files and subfolders inside. You can selec-



practical to restore just the files from the backup because many registry entries are created when the tools are installed. Instead the tools need to be reinstalled on the new hard drive using the supplied program disks and CD/DVD ROMs, and then the updates applied until it's a current version. Thus, being able to restore from the backup only the software that I wrote was a valuable feature of the backup utility. After installing the utility, it will prompt you to

tively disable parts of the subfolders by navigating down to them and turning off the checkmarks.

I would not recommend backing up from C:\ root since that will take a long time and generate a lot of files that can't be restored (such as operating system files, tools, etc.). The utility also can perform scheduled backups. The backup created can be just a file and thus moved / saved anywhere.

Fall Propagation, Cont'd.

Two common antennas are the beverage, which is quite long, but low to the ground, and the K9AY antenna, which can be steered. The K9AY provides a cardioid pattern which can be steered in one of 4 directions. A beverage normally needs to be pointed in a desired direction and left fixed in position. Due to the low antenna levels, careful prevention of stray feedline pickup is needed for either antenna type. We'll discuss some of these techniques in the next issue.

Badges are available

The 2009 RVARC badges have been printed. Those that have not already been picked up will be available at any of the RVARC club meetings. If you have not received your badge please let me know so I can print another one and correct any errors in the club database.

RVARC c/o
Tom McDermott, N5EG
3950 Southview Ter.
Medford, OR 97504

Next Club Meeting

Thursday, October 1, 2009. 7:00 PM
Red Cross Building, 60 Hawthorne St., Medford, OR
Across from Hawthorne Park
Program: Soundcards for Amateur Radio, Tom McDermott, N5EG

Rogue Valley Amateur Radio Club
c/o 3950 Southview Ter.
Medford, OR 97504