

Part 2 The 'Ups' and 'Downs' of running a club (late 1960's thru late 1970's)

The first several years for SWARC saw a major problem in that there was nowhere to meet. Each meeting was scheduled at the last minute at one of the member's houses and a meeting notice mailed out to each club member one week prior to that meeting. This is where, in the Constitution, one of the responsibilities of the secretary comes from. "...and mail written notices to each member of every meeting of the club ..." Southwood Secondary school hosted a number of meetings thanks to the Electronics teacher Mr. Westwood. A permanent home for SWARC was urgently needed and in March of 1967 'Doc' (Murray Fisk VE3FUU) offered his farm near Ayr for Field Day and possibly a new home for the club if they wanted to convert an old chicken house for this purpose. In May of 1967, members met at the farm for their regular monthly meeting with 6 members present. The spot looked good for Field Day and the chicken house had possibilities. Over the fall months, gyprock (dry wall) was donated by George Jeffery VE3EUQ, insulation by Russ Tousaw VE3GMJ and an old stove by Murray Fisk VE3FUU. By May of 1968, the new clubhouse was progressing and Stan Jackson VE3IC donated \$50.00, some paint and some equipment to the new club house in return for a life membership in SWARC. This appears to be the first life membership granted. At a time when the yearly membership in SWARC was \$3 per year, this represented about 20 years worth of dues. Great news – Starting with the October 1968 meeting, the third Thursday of the month rather than the fourth Monday of the month, will be at the new club house. New lights were installed for \$20, but after the November meeting, it was agreed that the club house was not heated well enough to continue meeting there until warmer weather. Actually, the club house was not used again until October of 1969 and then again in March through June of 1970. It seems that discussion on the club house only happened in November when the temperatures started to drop. "Should the 'shack' be repaired for the warmer months?" After much discussion the whole project was scrapped in September of 1971 with interest in decline and the farm for sale. The search for a new home began once again. After using an apartment building basement, member's homes, Allen Bradley Recreation room, several church halls and the Preston Fire Hall, the Dickson Centre meeting room and Gore Mutual Insurance meeting room worked for the next several years. Average meeting attendance during this time was 10 to 12 members with a high of 22 in early 1969. There were always a few visitors recorded and new members added to the roster. Unfortunately, there is no membership lists included in the archives and only first names sometimes with calls included in the minutes of meetings, so a crude spread sheet is being prepared as people are mentioned in the minutes.

Most meetings under 'old business' included a discussion on what to do at meetings. Many films were shown on everything from how crystals are grown, to more on transistors and 'magnetic force', even including the 1973 Indy 500. Many well known local amateurs Ross Caruthers, Dave Bell VE3CSB, John Riddell VE3AMZ, Harold Braun VE3DWH/VE3CD and others gave presentations on antenna theory, antenna construction, propagation and tuning commercial 2 meter radios to amateur frequencies. Slide presentations from around the world were enjoyed by all. Back then, company tours were fairly easy to arrange and so the club members toured Southwood school electronics and AV departments, Malton (Pearson) airport communications bays, General Electric in Guelph, Ratheon Canada in Waterloo and for the '*pièce de résistance*' a tour of the College Avenue, Guelph QTH of Fred Hammond VE3HC including his antenna farm, his private backyard museum of radio, custom ham shack and his north Guelph transformer manufacturing plant and private amateur HF amplifier design lab. I remember this tour even today after more than 35 years and of how I might dispose of the grand prize in Lottario should I ever purchase a \$1 ticket -- the largest prize at the time being \$100,000. It didn't hurt to have member and local DOC office radio inspector Eric Rush VE3XL on hand to discuss technical, regulatory and licensing issues at club meetings.

The call for items and articles for the bulletin was netting fewer and fewer items resulting in a number of bulletin editors resigning until finally in January of 1967 discussion arose as to whether the bulletin should continue. There appears to be few bulletins published until early 1968 with the name "South Waterloo Amateur" being chosen to kick start the new year when Russ Tousau VE3GMJ volunteered as editor.

Starting in December 1965 and continuing each subsequent year until ?, the club meeting in December became a dinner meeting held at various eateries in the area. These houses of *gastro delight* included The Charcoal Steak House in Kitchener, Holiday Inn both in Kitchener and Hespeler, Matador Steak House (formerly on Hespeler road on the site of the current YMCA complex), The Highland (formerly next to the Cambridge Memorial Hospital on Coronation Blvd.), The Kress Hotel (formerly on the corner of King Street and Fountain Street in Preston – Kress Hill) and other places not recorded. While the ladies (XYL's) were invited starting in 1967, few attended until it became a less business and more social gathering. George Jeffery VE3EUQ and others supplied flowers or corsages for the ladies. This social time eventually spawned the annual dinner/banquet in February (with the choice of date to correspond with Valentines Day) and a member's dinner meeting in December continuing. There was one criterion for the place for the dinner meeting; that being that the cost should not exceed \$5 each.

Members of the day are very active on the HF bands. Member Rees Powell VE3DJK will check into the CJ net on 80 meters each evening to accept traffic for this area. Starting in January 1968 and continuing well into the 80's is a club net on Wednesday evenings at 10:30 local time on 3750 KHz. I'll talk about field days in a future column.

Doc gave notice to increase the yearly cost of a ham station license from \$2.50 for the new license year starting in March 1969. Many discussions ensued with a letter on behalf of SWARC members being sent to the DOC vehemently opposing the increase. The fee increased to \$10 in March of 1970. Remember when a yearly fee was due? And if you didn't pay up, your station license was revoked and you would then have to apply for a new call sign.

Late 1969 saw discussions on the future of SWARC. Membership was dropping and few new members were added to the roster. This prompted the membership to look at constructive methods of attracting new members to the ham family and to the club. A special meeting was arranged for September of 1971 at the Galt Public Library inviting the public to come and learn about Amateur Radio and SWARC. After spending \$54.74 – the equivalent of 11 membership fees – on print and radio advertising, refreshments and the donation of an ARRL handbook to the library, membership interest increased. From the new members and guests that attended the next number of meetings, a formal code and theory class was set up to start in the fall of 1972. SWARC membership cards are introduced in October of 1971.

With the forming of the City of Cambridge in January 1973, some discussion ensued and a motion made to change the name of our club to *Cambridge Amateur Radio Club*. A resounding NO was heard and we remained SWARC – and officially to this day. So – the question of where our name comes from is asked now and again. Waterloo County was divided into federal political districts of north and south. Galt, Preston and Hespeler were in the south district and so many organizations prefaced their names with 'South Waterloo' Few of those organizations still exist that did not change their name after 1973.

Meeting days waffled between the third Thursday and the fourth Monday of each month with Mondays being the preference.

A tradition that started in late 1968 of having coffee and donuts at each meeting continues through this time period.

Did You Know? From the last column -- So -- who were the two fellows in the picture from the past?

These two club members are John "Woody" Woodfield VE3CYK (SK) and his father Bill Woodfield VE3CYK (SK). No -- I didn't make a mistake -- Bill studied and applied for his son's call after John passed away. This was not a major problem for Bill who was a radio operator during WW2.



Pictured above is John VE3CYK operating FD in 1978

I met John in late 1967 or early 1968 when I entered grade nine at Preston High School. Woody was a year or two ahead of me and welcomed me to the sound and lighting committee. In conversation with him I found out we had met a few months earlier on 11 meters. Born with multiple sclerosis, there were not many activities at school or as a SWARC club member that John did not get involved in. Bill was right beside John from day one. Most people afflicted by MS do not live a long life and suffer many complications. When I met John, he walked with two arm canes and progressed fairly rapidly to being in a wheelchair full time. Bill worked full time including overtime at Eastern Steel in Preston to support his son and his wife Wilma. Wilma developed MS after John was born and progressed very quickly passing away in the early 1970's. John needed to be mobile, so Bill purchased and repaired an old electric golf cart for John to use as a way of getting to and from the library and stores in Preston from their home on Dover Street. John even had 11 meters in his golf cart just in case he needed some assistance. Two meters was not as active at the the time and few handhelds were

practical. John and Bill wanted to travel, so Bill purchased and outfitted an old school bus with all the 'modern' accessories including a generator, an all mode 2 meter rig, low power HF station and 11 meters.. Before call sign plates were available to amateurs in Ontario, John and Bill displayed a special 'Ham' plate on the back of the bus. Watch a future column for a story on Ham license plates.

Both John and Bill were very active in SWARC starting in 1967. John served as Bulletin editor for 5 years and Secretary for 3. Bill served as Vice President and subsequently 3 terms as president. As treasurer, Bill looked after the club accounts for many many many years. Both Bill and John also took part in many field day activities, public displays other club events.

John was an avid vegetable gardener. His ham shack and electronics work area were literally in the middle of his 'garden'. John occupied the entire living room of their tiny house at 519 Dover Street and had a very large hydroponic garden set up on three sides of the living room with his large desk/work table placed in the centre of the room facing the front window. John managed to work for Day and Ross trucking for a few years as a dispatcher

In 1973, John designed the only official club crest. They sold to club members for \$2.50



Did You Know ---

Club member Stan Jackson VE3IC's QSL card from years past. Do you recognise the street? The stores? Remember, as a pharmacist, Stan owned and operated a pharmacy, radio and TV shop.



Do you remember this fella on 80 meters?

