

# SPARK

the monthly newsletter of the

North Ottawa Amateur Radio Club

## March 2012

### IN THIS ISSUE

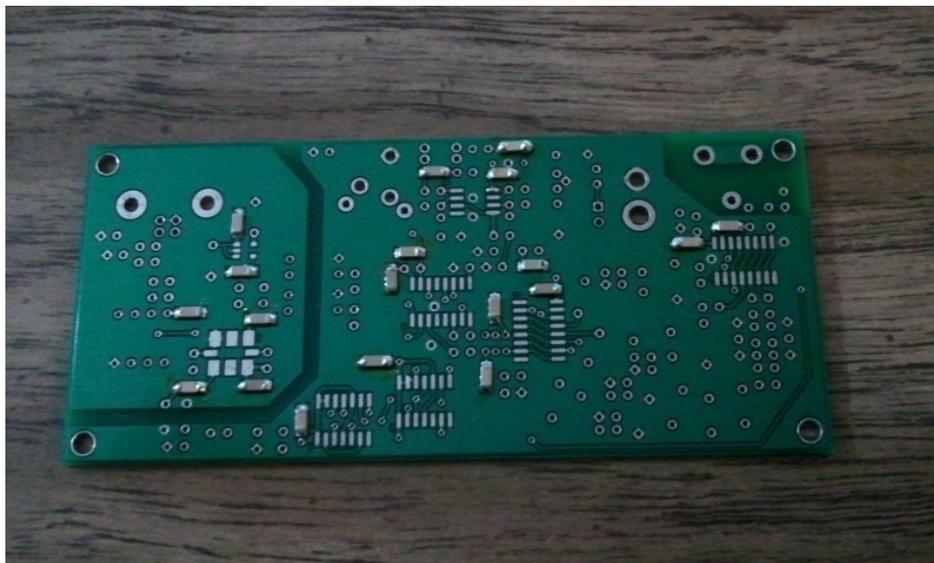
February minutes.....pg 2

Report from Florida.....pg 3

Events calendar.....pg 5

60 meter changes.....pg 6

Swap 'n Shop.....pg 7



A solution to the age-old problem of SMT soldering was the program for February's meeting. Read about it on page 2!

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\*\* VACANT \*\*

### NOARC 2 meter repeater

W8CSO/R – 145.490 output, 144.890 input

Main RX: PL 94.8 – Grand Rapids RX: PL 91.5 – EchoLink: N8FQ-R #469574

# Minutes of the February 2012 meeting

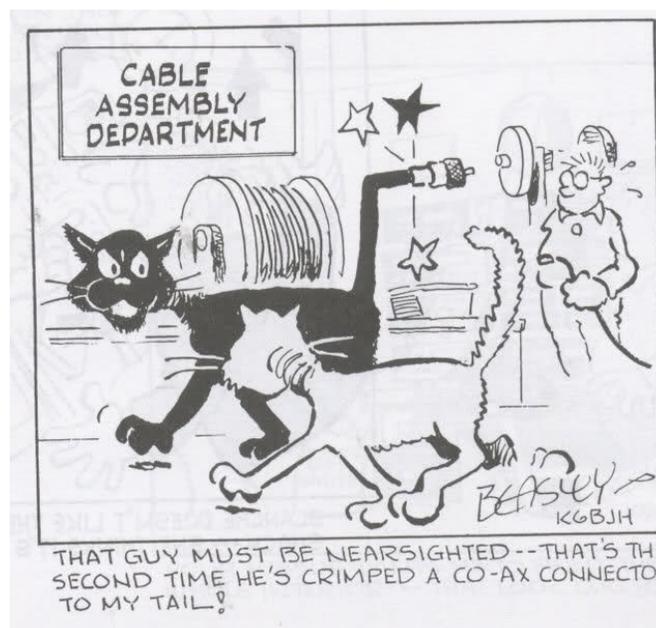
It was a cool evening, not bad for mid-winter, but not as warm as it had been in recent days, either. Shortly after 6:30 PM, a small group of stalwarts made their way to the Spring Lake District Library for what would amount to the February business meeting.

First on the scene was Joe, N8FQ, who began unpacking the necessary equipment for the evening's program. Paul, W8IQE walked in a few minutes later, followed by Jerome, K8CCJ and Alan, KC8SRS. As 7 PM came and went, we decided that no one else was going to show up. The decision was made to forgo the formal business portion of the meeting and get straight to Joe's presentation on reflow soldering.

For the demo, Joe brought in a SoftRock Ensemble RX II software-defined receiver kit which he'd bought nearly a year before and had yet to start working on, along with a tub of solder paste and a 500-watt heat gun. Some discussion took place as Joe demonstrated the reflow technique for soldering surface-mount components. Using a couple of toothpicks, a small dab of solder paste was placed on each of the circuit board's pads, then the components (0.01 $\mu$ F capacitors in this case) were adhered roughly in place. The heat gun was then directed at them for about a minute, long enough for the solder to flow. As the working temperature was reached, the solder drew itself neatly onto the pads, and the components centered themselves perfectly in place.

The demonstration concluded at about 7:50 PM, and the assembled crowd promptly disbursed.

-Joe, N8FQ



# Meanwhile, in Florida...

From: Roger Simmons <rogersimmons6@gmail.com>  
To: Joe Veldhuis <jvn8fq@gmail.com>  
Subject: Thanks for the snow reports.  
Date: Mon, 27 Feb 2012 13:14:21 -0500

Joe,

Here is what we've been doing as Snow Birds. You decide if it's worthy of the Spark.

It was four o'clock in the morning. It was dark in the storage room where Phyllis and I were sleeping. Some noise outside woke us both up. She soon had a flashlight in her hand and told me the time. Time to get up. A couple days ago, my sister Judy and brother in law told us that we were to receive a balloon ride in lieu of a birthday and Christmas present this year.

At four thirty, we departed the La Chateau Apartments Don & Judy's home, and headed south on US-1 from Vero Beach. It was dark and Judy, the driver, was the only one awake in the car. Sometime later, (don't ask me when) probably a half to forty minutes driving time, we pulled into the McDonalds parking lot in Port St. Lucie Florida. We staggered out of the car and into the restaurant. It was to be the meeting place between the High on You Balloon Company and ourselves. As I stood in line for service, (a cup of coffee), I noticed the guy in front of us had a "High on You Balloon tee shirt on. "Are you Rick?" I asked. " No, I'm Duane", he answered. " Rick will be here soon ". I picked up the tab for Duane's breakfast, (Two dollars and fifteen cents), hoping to make some brownie points. This crew would be handling the equipment with our lives in their hands. "Thanks" he said and walked out to his car to wait for the rest of the crew in the dark.

The High on You Balloon Company arrived. You knew this because it was written on the sides of the nine passenger van. Painted on the whole vehicle was a colorful picture of the balloon. On the rear, an extended platform containing the basket, balloon and apparatus used to make it float in the air. "Rick" Sommers, (not his real name, changed to protect the innocents), was the driver and pilot. Phyllis, Don and Judy, myself and three crew members boarded the van. Rick launched a helium filled yellow balloon. It wafted nearly straight up about a hundred feet then angled north west, toward the Atlantic Ocean. Perfect. Rick jumped into the van and drove for fifteen or twenty minutes in a south east direction. We arrived at an open field and the crew went to work

It was still dark out. They unfolded the balloon from the basket. There was nearly a hundred feet of it trailing the van. Rick tied a line to the rear of the van. The rest of the crew spread out the balloon as far as possible. Next two of them took a hoop at the base. While Rick tilted a fire breathing dragon, or so it seemed. A three foot blast of flame roared forth into the gaping mouth of the behemoth creature. It was impressive. In the still of a quiet dark morning, in the empty field, the large creature came to life. It rose up and crew members manned ropes to control it. I tried in vain to photograph the scene. It was still way too dark, but the sun was starting to brighten the eastern sky. When the craft was nearly vertical, the pilot boarded the basket and invited the rest of us to do so. I smiled at Don, 81 years old as he struggled to get in the basket. Then it was my turn. Not so funny when I tried it. Three

persons, who shall remain unknown, had to help me in. When the two ladies got on, we were ready.

It was a very small basket indeed. The five of us crowded into this tiny carriage, no more than four foot square. The rail was no higher. It was reinforced basket woven. There were four legs forming a framework for the powerful flame thrower. Rick pulled the ignition cord unleashing that loud flame again into the bowels of the balloon. It was dramatically beautiful. I was looking down when , all of a sudden, the ground silently drifted away. We were off and away. The view was spectacular.

The countryside drifted away as tiny cows and cars traversed the ground below us. Dawn snuck up on us as smoothly as our departure. My "station" was on a corner next to the control panel. I don't know what the other instrument was, but I recognized the altimeter. "Is that 700 feet" I asked, trying to impress the pilot and myself. "Naw", he said, " Its old. You have to add 200 feet to that. We're about 900 feet. I had my two meter hand held with me and in the dark crowded conditions of our basket, tried to contact another amateur radio operator. I couldn't find a repeater in my directory. So I tried the National Listening Frequency of 145.000 Mhz. No response so I tuned up and down the frequencies. I heard two hams having a QSO (conversation). They were speaking English. The other QSO was in Spanish. I didn't understand them. Neither responded to my balloon mobile pleas. In no time,(about 45 minutes) the sun was up. Our pilot started looking for a place to land. He spotted field in a residential subdivision. Aiming for the field, he called directions the ground crew. The van was also a chase car. The directions were given over what looked like, to me, a family radio, strapped to one of the four stanchions. As we dipped closer to the ground, the pilot alternately pulled the cords releasing hot air from the balloon and blowing more hot air from the flame thrower. It soon became obvious that we were going to miss the field in favor of the subdivision.

We descended nearly missing a light pole. " Face the direction of our drift. Bend your knees to form a shock absorber. Stay in the basket and hold on." He said. We came down, possibly three or four miles an hour, with a harder than expected thump. There was no spring in the basket. We had landed on a couples driveway. About six feet from someone's car. An Asian gentleman came out of his front door less than ten feet from our balloon. Seeing the surprised look on his face, we said "good morning." He good naturedly said "good morning".

Our ground crew dragged our balloon to the field we had aimed for and then to a paved street . We then disembarked from the basket. The ground crew collapsed the balloon back into the hundred foot strip of Dacron or what ever it is made of. They gathered it into bunches. About six foot sections were tied off with Velcro straps. The whole thing was then placed on everyone's right shoulders and marched to the basket where the pilot folded it back into the basket. We loaded into the van and drove to a nearby park. There, the crew and pilot laid out a table complete with Champaign, blueberry muffins and orange juice. The pilot made a nice toast being grateful for a trip to the sky and safe return to earth. We then packed up the van again and were driven back to the Mc Donald's , the restaurant we had started from.

Respectfully submitted;

Phyllis and Roger

KB8NLN N8RXC

# **March 2012 calendar of events and net control schedule**

## **Every Tuesday:**

NOARC net/coffee at Russ' in Grand Haven  
8:00 PM

## **Every Wednesday:**

Breakfast at Idle Hour Restaurant in Spring Lake  
7:00 AM

## **Every Saturday:**

Breakfast at Vic's Restaurant in Spring Lake  
7:00 AM

## **March 3-4:**

ARRL DX contest – phone  
March 3, 0000 UTC – March 4, 2359 UTC

## **March 17:**

Michigan Crossroads Hamfest, Marshall  
<http://www.w8df.com/hamfest.html>

## **March 22:**

Skywarn training, Fillmore St. Complex main conference room  
12220 Fillmore St  
7:00 PM – 9:30 PM

## **March 29:**

NOARC monthly business meeting  
Spring Lake District Library, 6:30 PM

## **NOARC net control schedule:**

March 6: **Joe, N8FQ**  
March 13: **Bev, KC8JWA**  
March 20: **Paul, W8IQE**  
March 27: **John, N8YQD**

Keep an eye on the events calendar on [w8cso.org](http://w8cso.org) for net control openings, and e-mail me at [editor@w8cso.org](mailto:editor@w8cso.org) if you want to get on the list! We still need volunteers for April!

# FCC Releases New Rules for 60 Meters

On November 18, the FCC released a *Report and Order* (**R&O**), defining new rules for the 60 meter (5 MHz) band. These rules are in response to a *Petition for Rulemaking* (**PRM**) filed by the ARRL more than five years ago and a June 2010 *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* (**NPRM**). In the *R&O*, the FCC replaced one of the channels in the band, increased the maximum authorized power amateur stations may transmit in this band and authorized amateur stations to transmit three additional emission designators in the five channels in the 5330.6-5406.4 kHz band (60 meters).

The Amateur Radio Service in the United States has a secondary allocation on 60 meters. Only those amateurs who hold General, Advanced or Amateur Extra class licenses may operate on this band. Amateur stations must not cause harmful interference to -- and must accept interference from -- stations authorized by any administration in the fixed service, as well as mobile (except aeronautical mobile) stations authorized by the administrations of other countries.

Here is a summary of the changes. Please note that these changes will take effect **on March 5, 2012**.

- The frequency 5368.0 kHz (carrier frequency 5366.5 kHz) is withdrawn and a new frequency of 5358.5 kHz (carrier frequency 5357.0 kHz) is authorized.
- The effective radiated power limit in the 60 meter band is raised by 3 dB, from 50 W PEP to 100 W PEP, relative to a half-wave dipole. If another type of antenna is used, the station licensee must maintain a record of either the antenna manufacturer's data on the antenna gain or calculations of the antenna gain.
- Three additional emission types are authorized. **Data** (emission designator 2K80J2D, for example, PACTOR-III), **RTTY** (emission designator 60H0J2B, for example, PSK31) and **CW** (150HA1A, i.e. Morse telegraphy by means of on-off keying). For CW, the carrier frequency must be set to the center frequency. For data and RTTY the requirement to transmit "only on the five center frequencies specified" may be met by using the same practice as on USB, i.e. by setting the suppressed carrier frequency of the USB transmitter used to generate the J2D or J2B emission to the carrier frequency that is 1.5 kHz below the center frequency.

Automatic control on data and RTTY is not permitted; a control operator must be in a position to exercise either local or remote control over the transmitter. The FCC noted that "amateur operators must exercise care to limit the length of transmissions so as to avoid causing harmful interference to Federal stations." This is a very important caveat: If a Federal station requires amateurs to cease using a frequency, the amateur station must be able to do so without delay.

Read more:

<http://www.arrl.org/news/fcc-releases-new-rules-for-60-meters>

<http://www.arrl.org/news/arrl-publishes-new-guidelines-for-60-meters>

# Swap 'n shop

**For Sale:** Zenith Trans-Oceanic all-band radios – John Sundstrom, N8YQD

**For Sale:** Textbooks on basic electronic theory, multimeters and oscilloscopes – Paul Zellar, W8IQE

**Wanted:** Good, working tubes – Jerome Novotny, K8CCJ - 231-206-1388  
The **Te-Ne-Ke** is still in production - \$45 CONUS, \$55 DX

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## NOARC membership form

**Dues:**

**Individual:** \$25 yearly or \$70 for 3 years

**Family:** \$35 yearly or \$75 for 3 years

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Callsign:** \_\_\_\_\_

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