



FCC Exams

April was a busy month for your radio committee. A General Test review was organized by Chris Warner and led by Bill Whitney. After the review we conducted FCC exams for all three license classes culminating in 16 successful new licenses or upgrades. The exam session was led by our experienced Volunteer Examiner Team of Heather Ballaine, Bill Whitney, Chuck Steward, and Dwight Shaw. After the exam we had technical programs on marine DSC by Peter Okonski and antenna coax selection by Dan Withers.

Radio Rendezvous III

Under dynamic skies – meaning a mixture of drizzle, wind, and sun – the 3rd Radio Rendezvous kicked off on April 14th with operators on boats and a few land yachts



reporting in on two meters while underway. Boats were still arriving at 1300 when we began FCC testing on elements 3 & 4. As a result there are now 5 new General licensees and 1 new Extra Class licensee in the Committee in addition to 16 new licenses and upgrades earlier in the week. Congratulations to all and thanks to Heather Ballaine and our VE teams. At 1500 the Open Boat event got underway with visits to the 14 boats participating. This was a great time to inspect



radios and join in on spirited discussions about antennas, grounding, radios, and how to optimize systems for coastal and off-shore communications. After the traditional Green Box our group of 37 celebrated with a well organized Pot

Luck directed by Laura Cruz with assistance from experienced club Pot Luckers. The dinner included the awarding of ARC pins to new licensees in attendance (Chris Warner, Craig & Kay Compton, Frances Chapin, Peggy Steward, Viktor Grabner), and experienced Amateur Radio Operators, but new members, Bob Swayne and George McCully. The next morning, after checking in on the Boaters Net, a number of boats participated in “around-the-bands” exercise by stretching our expertise communicating on multiple frequencies and noting signal reports – all good practice for emergency communications and getting ready for boating season.

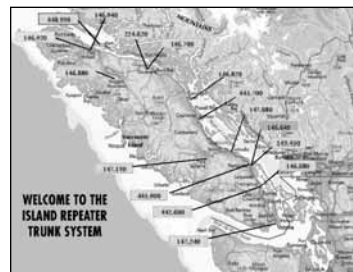
Outstations and radio access

The North Island Amateur Radio Society provides an extensive network of Amateur Radio repeaters that span Vancouver Island. The mission of the society is “to provide a network of open Amateur radio repeaters, for general and emergency communications use, throughout Vancouver Island, surrounding waters and parts of the lower mainland on the West Coast of British Columbia Canada.” The URL is <http://www.islandtrunksystem.org/> – where you can find more information about the system. You may want to print applicable pages for reference before you head north. The very popular BC Boaters Net meets every evening around 5 p.m. and uses the trunk system to enable check-ins from the San Juan Islands to Port Hardy. There are also other nets during the day and the system is available 7x24 for emergencies. You can probably reach at least one of the repeaters from Henry Island Outstation to Cortez Outstation. A big advantage of the two meter trunk system is the use of VHF and UHF frequencies that are more immune to radio interference compared to HF, e.g., the 75m boater nets. So, it is quite common to hear stations on 2m, but not 75m. There are usually a number of stations that check-in on both bands enabling traffic between the nets.



Heather Ballaine, AB7JT, offers this report of an active Amateur Radio operator, Bruce McCaffrey, N7OJ (her dad).

With all the newly licensed hams in our club, perhaps some of you are wondering what happens to all the hams that successfully complete their exams? Here is one ham story I will share with you.



For more detailed images of the Vancouver Island Trunk System and Repeaters, go to www.islandtrunksystem.org