

NORTH SHORE ARC



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Christmas Party 2010 (A good get-together)





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2011 Durham Hamfest is moving!

From Walter VA3WYC

Hello Folks! I hope you had a relaxing time over the holidays. I would like to share some exciting news regarding the Durham Hamfest this year. This event is jointly hosted by NSARC and SPARC for the past 35 years and is seen as a key annual event and important source of revenue for both clubs. Sadly, over the years, the financial returns have dwindled as attendance suffered and vendor participation also dropped. To make matters worse, the cost of mounting this event has steadily gone up over the years.

When you combine the drop in revenue with the rising cost of operation, anyone can tell you that sooner than later, it will become economically unviable to continue hosting the event. In fact, I have heard many hams admit that Hamfest days are numbered. The sad thing to that statement is that it conveys a tone of pessimism to others, who on the basis of what they heard, can decide not to participate or attend the event in the future. Talk about a vicious cycle!

Mindful of this likely scenario, I felt the need to take stock of what we have and see what we can do to change the trend. Late last year, I began researching on an alternative location for this year's Hamfest. I am happy to report that a suitable location has been found at the Pickering Recreation Complex. The complex features a banquet hall with 8100 square feet of space, 2 separate service entrances by the curb and 2 main doors inside the complex. Although the venue does not offer a cafeteria or access to a bank machine, I think that poses less of a liability and if at all, just a minor inconvenience. It also comes with a full industrial kitchen (won't be of use to us though) and a wet bar with a loaded pop dispenser. The bar also allows us to set up a coffee machine so we can offer the brew and pop for free or for sale.

The good thing about this hall is that they will charge us slightly less than what we used to pay at the Iroquois Complex in Whitby. But the best thing about it is that the cost of rental includes the supply, setup and take-down of tables and chairs. I thought these all translated into a lot of benefits we could not ignore. After consulting with Peter Henry, VA3PWH, and the SPARC executives last November, I went ahead and booked the venue for Hamfest on April 16, 2011!

My plan now is conduct a slide presentation during the Feb. general meeting of both clubs to show the floor layout, interior and exterior pictures of the venue and answer any questions you may have. I will certainly welcome any input on procedural changes required for the event, vendors, attendees, security and parking.

The biggest and immediate impact in our move is that it frees us from having to set up and take down tables and free up some funds we normally allocate for renting tables and chairs. This reduces one of the thorns on our side – the operating cost of the event.

However, members from both clubs have to deal with the other thorn – revenue. The way I see it, we contend with two factors that matter in this area – vendors and attendees. Unfortunately, their presence is also much less in our control. We can only steer the outcome and hope that our efforts will work in our favour. But you can bet your butt it won't happen unless we get off ours! So please send the word out regarding the change in venue. It puts us about 10km closer to Toronto but that also means it's 10 km farther from the east end. Will it incent more attendees and vendors? Only time will tell. But we have to spread the word and we can't do this soon enough.

As of last month, the Hamfest website has been updated (thank you Laird!). I have updated our posting in TCA and this will be reflected in their Jan. /Feb. issue. Information in the RAC and Ontario Swap Shop websites have also been updated. We will mail out our flyers earlier and hope vendors will respond positively to the change. I need you to help spread the word. Mention this to your ham friends. Talk about it on air. Write about it in your emails. When the date draws near, please make an effort to check-in on various nets around the region and pass the word around. The act of one may not do much but if we all do this, it would be hard NOT to have any effect. It's not that hard to do but you'd be surprised how effective this can be.

So, that in a big nutshell is what lies in store for us this year. The outcome is not guaranteed but sitting back and doing nothing only guarantees more of what we have already seen. I am excited and I hope you feel the same way too. I have always been grateful for the support and help from NSARC folks and I look forward to working with you again in the coming months.

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As we enjoy the winter season, we can relax and prepare ourselves for the coming year. Our Club has a full agenda, starting with Hamfest and rolling on to Field Day, before we enter into the community support events. Reflect on the happy memories of the Christmas Party. Remember the good news from the Club Executive on the coming year. Let's all pitch in where-ever we can. If anyone has pictures of past Hamfests, please let us know. It would be good to capture this for the benefit of newer Club members.

Your humble scribe,.

de Ken.