

Airwaves reach out

By CRAIG PIECHURA

You'd figure that a man with access to the most remote corners of the globe through his ham radio would be full of fascinating insights.

After all, Southfield resident William Roberts has had conversations with ham, or amateur radio operators, in Yugoslavia, Asiatic Russia, Spain, Sweden and the far-flung United Republic of Cameroon in Western Africa.

Did the Russians want to know where they could buy a pair of Levi's?

Do the people of Cameroon eat macaroons?

How do ham radio operators from other countries view the rapidly changing political alliances?

Roberts, 27, says your guess is as good as his.

"If you're talking to someone far away you usually give your name, your location, tell what kind of equipment you're using and maybe tell them about the weather and your family."

And while it's permissible to talk politics over amateur radio, Roberts says many hams avoid any mention of religion or politics. The talk is usually about megahertz wattage.

"At 15 (12 years ago) I happened to ask a guy in Cuba how the sugar crop was going," Roberts said. "He didn't bother to come back (on the air)."

"And when I lived in Argentina 10 years ago, I looked at their amateur radio rules and restrictions. At that time their rules said you couldn't talk about politics or religion over the air."

BESIDES, SAYS ROBERTS, whenever he makes contact with someone faraway, there are always a number of other hams listening in, waiting to make their connection and log in another contact with another country.

Hams are recognized by the American Radio Relay League if they reach 100 different countries or all 50 states. But the conversations aren't all so mundane. Roberts remembers the time

he was talking to a ham in Cuba who said he was able to pick up FM radio from the states but couldn't get parts to convert his receiver to stereo.

"The parts cost about 50 cents so I sent them off in the mail to him," Roberts said. "They were returned to me when the state department refused to send the equipment to Cuba. That was the only time I'd been asked for a freebie."

Another time Roberts received an urgent call for medical supplies from the United Republic of Cameroon.

"Apparently, a young kid had his eye poked out and needed something for an injection," Roberts said.

After getting the pertinent information down, Roberts relayed the message to a missionary network which sent the medicine.

"I do know the medicine did get there," Roberts said. "But I don't know how the young boy made out."

DURING THE Detroit riot of 1967 Roberts worked with the Southfield Civil Defense Department using auxiliary communication to help find food and clothing for displaced families.

In the California earthquake of 1971, Roberts made contact with a fellow Alma College student's mother when the phone lines were down.

When a disaster strikes, Roberts says government and commercial communications networks can't handle the volume of emergency messages. For

that reason, he said, it is imperative that local governments allow hams to operate equipment without imposing harsh antenna height restrictions.

Hams who live in the city turned out in force in late January when the City Council proposed an ordinance which would have limited CB and ham antennae to a maximum height of 50 feet.

AFTER HAMS ARGUED that radio waves should be at least 66 feet high to guarantee emergency messages will get through, council approved a tower ordinance which allows antenna heights of up to 75 feet.

Neighboring Farmington Hills has recently banned any towers above 25 feet. Detroit has a 75-foot limit.

Fears of the tower falling onto a neighbor's house are unwarranted, Roberts said, if the towers are inspected by the city building department. Manufacturers of antennae specify the amount of concrete needed to anchor the tower and set the length of guy wires needed to secure the structure.

Roberts said ham operators are unfairly lumped in with CB operators who operate at power levels much beyond the legal limit of 2 watts and interfere with surrounding television, telephone and radio reception.

Roberts said hams will usually buy a filter for a neighbor's TV set or stereo if they are causing interference.

"I bought a guy a \$2 high-pass filter for his old, black and white Philco TV

set to keep things amicable in the neighborhood."

City Public Safety Director Rollin Tobin said Southfield hams have proven to be a valuable asset and that's why he lobbied to get council to set a rea-

sonable antenna height limit.

"Their cooperation with government agencies and the emergency work they do far outweighs any problems people might have about aesthetics of towers or interference," Tobin said.

Mercy artists win contest

Three Mercy High School students placed among the top 10 finalists in a poster contest sponsored by the Society of Automotive Engineers.

The girls, who each won a \$50 bond, were: Michelle Decker, an 11th grader from West Bloomfield; Leslie Ratica, a senior from Farmington Hills; and Lucia Kemenu, a 10th grade student from Highland Park.

The theme of the contest was automotive fuel economy. Judging took place last Thursday by members of the society. The contest was open to students in the tri-county area.

Prizes were donated by Borg-Warner.

COUPON

PLASTIC GAL
HOMO
MILK
Limit One
Expires 7 Days

159¢ **SAVE!**

MAPLE VILLAGE DISCOUNT DRUGS
DOWNTOWN FARMINGTON CENTER
478-6320

COUPON

GRAND OPENING

LEON'S BAKERY

Homemade Bread
Fresh Donuts
Coffee
Middle East Food

on Ten Mile Road
near Meadowbrook **348-2855**

If you're not wearing it, Sell it.

You can't enjoy your jewelry if it's sitting in your safe deposit box. Sell it for immediate cash. We purchase fine gems, Diamonds, and Gold jewelry.

A service to private owned owners, banks and estates.

Norman Allan
Gemologist • Diamondologist Established 1919
Birmingham, Michigan 48010 Call 642-5575



You are invited to attend a Cuisinart demonstration, where you'll discover the many ways that this ingenious food processor can help you shorten cooking tasks and expand your culinary expertise.

A. Model CFP-9, \$140; B. Model DLC-7, \$250; C. Model CFP-5, \$200.

Friday, February 23, from 1 to 3 p.m.

Jacobson's
BIRMINGHAM

Detroit Showing

EMPEROR GRANDFATHER CLOCKS

**Saturday
Sunday
Monday**

February 24, 25, 26
Simultaneous Shows
HOLIDAY INN - TROY
1-75, Exit Rochester
2537 Rochester Ct.
AND
HOLIDAY INN - SOUTHFIELD
28555 Telegraph Rd.
1-696 & US 24

1 P.M. til 9 P.M.

- * Full Week Weight Driven Brass Movement
- * Westminster Chimes
- * Solid 3/4 Inch Black Walnut, Mahogany, Cherry & Oak
- * Do-It Yourself Kits
- * Finished Clocks
- * 1-Year Warranty

YOU GET THE BEST BUY FROM EMPEROR CLOCK COMPANY

Clock movements imported from West Germany combined with skilled furniture craftsmanship give Emperor clocks a warm, rich beauty and lasting dependability as heirloom timekeeping instruments.

SPECIAL SALE PRICES DURING ENTIRE SHOW **VISA**

PROMPT SHIPMENT GUARANTEED from our Fairhope, Ala. plant. See these beautiful traditional Emperor Grandfather Clocks at this Special FREE Showing.

A Direct Factory Representative

U.S. & PEGGY LARGE

will show you each model and answer questions.

Write for Free Color Catalog

EMPEROR CLOCK COMPANY
FAIRHOPE, ALA. 36532

Visit Our Showroom
WORLD'S LARGEST MAKER OF GRANDFATHER CLOCKS

Observer & Eccentric

Classified Ads

Work!

HURRY! LAST WEEK!
OUR SALE OF FLOOR
SAMPLES and ONE-OF-A-KINDS

70% OFF

FURNITURE/LIGHTING
CLOTHING/CHINA/JEWELRY
SALE ENDS FEB. 28

orthogonality

Two locations: 135 S. Woodward, Birmingham / 642-1460
330 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor / 662-2600

COLONIAL - TRADITIONAL
FURNISHINGS & INTERIORS

Soble's

- CONOVER
- SUGAR HILL PINE
- HARDEN CHERRY

COUNTRY SHOPPE

SINCE 1922

531-3430
20620 Fensell (Five Mile)

Oriental Rugs

82nd Anniversary

SALE

NOW THROUGH MARCH 3

Purveyors of Oriental Rugs Since 1897.

tadross & zahrloute

Birmingham Shop: 108 S. Woodward 644-8200
Detroit Designer/Decorator Store: 136 Madison Avenue 963-7400

Name your game. Izod® sportswear shows champion performance every time.

Participant or spectator, you're with the right team with sportswear bearing the alligator applique.

A. Ivory, white, navy, red, light blue, yellow, beige, green, brown acrylic knit cardigan sweater in sizes S-M-L-XL, \$25.

B. Lacoste® polyester/cotton knit shirt in same colors as sweater. S-M-L-XL, \$19.

Jacobson's
BIRMINGHAM

FREE PARKING JUST A STEP AWAY - WE WILL VALIDATE YOUR TICKET