

Ham radio - continued from page 1

The FCC requires by law that hams are to avoid interfering with appliances and electronics of their neighbors. Mitchell noted that the ham community in general is quite good at self-policing, and he was attracted to the unspoken code of conduct that existed when he first entered the ham community.

"It's a fraternity, and you treat one another with respect on the air," said Mitchell.

Arguably the biggest change in radio since Mitchell began as a ham was the shift away from vacuum tube technology towards the use of transistors, which, compared to their predecessor, were more robust, took up less space and generated far less heat. Radios today also possess features that make them much easier to operate.

Although radio began using Morse code, there have since arisen a wide variety of new forms of communication, along with a variety of niches and sub-hobbies within the ham community. When hooked up to a computer, there are voice modes and virtually limitless forms of digital communication. Some hams like to send signals into space. EME, or Earth - Moon - Earth, otherwise known as a moon-bounce, is when a signal is bounced off the surface of the moon and then returns back to

them on Earth. Ham's will also send signals to astronauts aboard the international space station, some of which are hams themselves.

QRP operations, or reduced power operations, are also popular in the ham community, where the goal is to make communications using as little power as possible. As a reference, Mitchell will typically use around 100 watts when operating his equipment, whereas the average QRP operator uses less than 5 watts. Mitchell himself enjoys this niche as well, once taking his portable QRP radio with him when he went backpacking.

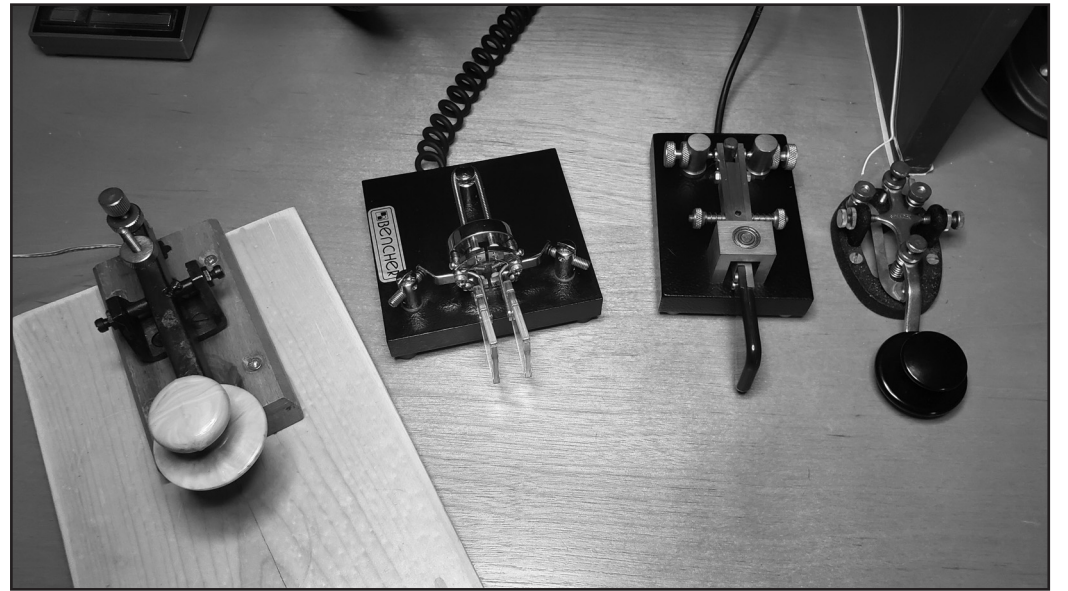
Contesting is another popular ham activity, although not one Mitchell often participates in when the goal is to make as many contacts as possible in a given amount of time. High speed telegraphy, or HST, is another popular form of competition in European countries like Russia; however, it has yet to catch on in the U.S.

Another sub-hobby within the hobby is the collection of QSL cards, QSL being a confirmation receipt of contact with other hams, and are akin to postcards. These cards are also a way for fellow ham's to confirm contacts they have made over the years. Over the years, Mitchell has collected many cards from across the

globe, many of which he acquired back when he first entered the hobby. Mitchell's first contact was to New Zealand. Mitchell had assembled his own low-power radio when he was fourteen, and by the time he had entered junior high school, he had already made contact with many hams in other countries, including Australia, France, Belgium, Argentina, Denmark, Czechoslovakia and others. Although not as commonly used as they once were, Mitchell still enjoys collecting unique QSL cards from the hams he meets; they are both a mark of pride and proof that you made contact.

Mitchell continues to appreciate the numerous niches within the amateur radio hobby, and there is always something new to pick up. Mitchell recently sent his first contact via radiogram, something he had been wanting to learn for over forty years. All hams record contacts they make; however, only some do so for the purpose of later sending radiograms via "traffic nets" with the help of fellow hams.

"There's always something new to learn," Mitchell said. "I've been in it for 42 years now, and I'm still doing new things. There's always something new to do in this hobby."



COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Having practiced using Morse code for so long, amateur radio operator Todd Mitchell has collected a number of CW keys for his collection, including an old fashioned Russian model (left).



A HAM'S SHACK

Inside his radio operator's "shack," Todd Mitchell has assembled several home radios and other important equipment for making contact with fellow hams across the globe. Mitchell is a long-time user of Morse code and makes nearly all of his contacts using it.



EVERY HAM HAS A CALL SIGN

Every amateur "ham" radio operator, including local ham Todd Mitchell, has their own call sign. Not every ham is bold enough, however, to have their call sign also be on their license plate.



PROOF OF CONTACT

QSL cards may look a little bit like fancy postcards, but in reality, they function as physical proof of making contact with fellow amateur radio operators, or "hams." These are just some of the QSL cards from Todd Mitchell's collection; he also retains a number of cards from when he first entered the hobby.

Dear Canby Community,

Canby is a rare community, we have healthy businesses, there are a number of churches to choose from in this community and there are some truly exceptional organizations in our community. One entity, the Canby Area Ministerial Association (CAMA) unites those churches with youth programs and community action. CAMA is the legal entity that oversees our exceptional youth program at "The Connection" and the CAMA building itself. All the churches in Canby have their own services and outreach programs but we work together as CAMA as well. CAMA received the building they use for "The Connection" and other community programs, as a gift from the Word of God Lutheran Church and it is an exceptional facility. The CAMA building was remodeled to include a leased area that houses the "Furniture Mission" of the Antelope Hills Church and a very nice community room that can be used by organizations and groups for small meetings. A considerable amount of money and countless volunteer hours went into this remodel and the kitchen/bathroom facilities that were also added.

Here is an honest assessment of the current situation. It costs money to run the award winning "Connection" program and to maintain the exceptional CAMA building with its different outreach functions. Look around the region, you will not find this kind of exceptional youth program nor this nice of a community building, anywhere. CAMA and "The Connection" management (Betsy Schmitt), staff and parents are trying hard to maintain the building and to facilitate "The Connection" programs from revenues from parent payments for childcare, church giving, fundraisers and community and individual donations. Still, we need more money to continue to do what is needed. CAMA has had to accrue loans for some of the building remodeling and "The Connection" budget barely breaks even. With the lack of fundraisers this year due to the Covid-19 situation, we are being stretched to the edge. We do say, "THANK YOU" to the individuals and organizations that have given to us in the past; you have been a tremendous help!

Is there any greater legacy anyone can leave than helping children and helping those in need? Children will be the future of this community and helping others works to the betterment of the whole community.

CAMA needs the help of community donations, individual gifts and endowments and estate giving to keep our CAMA building going and to keep "The Connection" programs benefiting the children of the future.

Every living person in Canby will leave some sort of legacy in our community, what will yours be?

Contributions for CAMA or for "The Connection" can be addressed to:
CAMA • Box 111 • Canby, MN 56220

Sincerely, Pastor Steve Maas, CAMA Treasurer



**Wear a mask
in public spaces.**



**Get tested if you
have any symptoms.**



**Answer if your health
department calls.**