

# Radio class impresses 'ham'

SHAWANO (PG) — A radio conversation with San Diego, Calif., and an introduction to computers were part of the agenda for the Shawano-Gresham School Board Monday night.

School board members heard about the Shawano's Franklin Middle School Radio Club from Al Hovey, middle school science coordinator, and the school's computer program from Eunice Berg, math coordinator.

Hovey, using his own radio equipment and federal license, runs a radio club and program that ties in lessons in geography, math and science.

Students start out with basic electricity and go on to electronics, learn Morse code and eventually become qualified to operate the bank of electronic gear that makes up Hovey's "ham" radio setup in the school.

Hovey said about 20 students are in the radio club. They come to school at 7:30 a.m. Tuesdays and devote

many noon hours to listening to shortwave radio. Students have spoken with "ham" operators in 38 countries and 19 states so far this year, Hovey said.

In a demonstration, Hovey contacted a "ham" operator in San Diego. The operator said he was impressed by his conversations with the Shawano students and wanted to bring a member of the San Diego schools to his home to try to persuade his local school district to set up a similar program.

Berg reported the same kind of enthusiasm for the computer program. Now three years old, the computer program features six computers with three levels of sophistication, she said.

Originally for the talented and gifted 8th grade pupils, the program has expanded to include pupils of different achievement levels in the 7th and 8th grades. Ten advanced math pupils from the 6th grade also

make use of the computers after school, she added.

All 7th grade math classes will have a unit on the computers starting next year, Berg said. "Computer literacy" is one of 10 recommended math skills, according to the National Council of Math Teachers, she said.

The aim is to make pupils familiar with the computers, not to make them all programmers.

One pupil has written a science project program that will be used in the coming week in all science classes. Another pupil has written a program on the stock market for social studies classes, she noted. A summer school class, with spots available for up to 66 pupils, will be offered this year.

Fred Ponschok, supervisor of career and vocational education for the district, reported to the board a "mini-visit" of two people at the Gresham High School to evaluate the vocational program April 13-15.

The evaluation is part of a five-year cycle involving all high school vocational programs, he said. The evaluations were sought by local vocational education instructors and satisfy federal mandates.

Using a structured format of visiting classes and interviewing staff, administrators and school board members, the evaluation team will prepare a written report on the Gresham program, Ponschok said.

Noting the extensive data on the vocational program, including questionnaires from graduates and employers, board member Ron Logemann asked why similar information couldn't be sought from academic or college-bound pupils.

Superintendent Gerald Thielke responded that the University of Wisconsin-Madison regularly provides a computer analysis of freshmen in their first semester there. Thielke reviewed some figures and concluded, "Our kids haven't taken a back seat to anyone at Madison."

The board also approved a lease for 34 acres of cropland in the town of Westcott to Franklin Strauss. The lease runs for five years and has an average rent of \$20 per acre per year.



# SATURDAY KID BITS

## Some students at Shawano schooled as hams

By MARY MADUSCHA  
Special to the Press-Gazette

**SHAWANO** — Students of Franklin Middle School, Shawano, have caught their teacher's enthusiasm for the world of electronics.

"And that was the purpose of my ham radio class . . . to alert the students to electronics, which is their future," said Alfred Hovey, a science teacher of 16 years at the school.

The students are learning how to operate amateur or ham radio. A person who operates an amateur radio station is called a "ham."

The amateur radio operator class was started in April 1980. It is open to sixth, seventh and eighth grade students interested in radio.

There are 35 students involved, including four girls. "Girls tend to shy away, but are beginning to see the important use of electronics," Hovey said.

The group meets once a week at 7:30 a.m., before classes start. This is an outside interest of the students and does not interfere with their classes.

"I can be sure to find at least one student in before their classes

start, learning the Morse Code or radio regulations, listening to the set or tinkering with the electronic equipment," said Hovey.

There is a computer in the room that the students use. The computer registers code and teletype of the radio.

Hovey spends extra time and shares his knowledge as a licensed ham radio operator with these students.

Before a room was set aside and equipment readied for the students at school, Hovey held the class in his home and allowed them to use his own radio.

He shows them the fun and excitement of receiving and sending to other countries.

A ham can reach other amateur radio operators all over the world. They have often relayed messages to one another to find out about relatives of people who live in areas struck by an earthquake, tornado or some other storm which may cut off regular communication lines, such as telephone wires.

There are three students who are now licensed novice ham operators. Two are in the seventh grade and one in the eighth grade.

The students have talked with radio "hams" in 42 foreign countries, with the latest the Philippine Islands. They have heard from 29 states.

Hovey has a collection of 171 countries which he has reached by radio, of which 151 have been confirmed by postcard.

Last summer Hovey and other Shawano area ham operators helped the students start up and run a ham radio station during the Centennial Exposition days in Shawano. The station ran from 3 p.m. and stayed on the air all night.

Along with the project, the students worked in designing a Centennial Certificate, honoring Shawano's 100 Years. This certificate could be purchased by all ham operators calling in to the student ham operators.

Because of poor air conditions, they could only issue 67 certificates but some requests are still coming in. During this time, the students had contacted hams in most of the states.

The students' favorite contact is a retired employee from General Dynamics Corporation in San Diego who encourages the students in their radio work.



Alfred Hovey shows the amateur radio set on which he instructs Shawano students.

Special to the Press-Gazette

# Shawano man contacts shuttle with ham radio

By Keith Goldschmidt

Of the Press-Gazette

When Al Hovey heard a voice from the heavens Saturday night, he couldn't believe it.

"The car roof just about went off," he said today.

He was sitting in his car about one mile from the Sheboygan County Airport when shuttle astronaut John-David Bartoe acknowledged Hovey's signal to the shuttle.

"WA9BZW, I read you loud and clear," Bartoe said.

Hovey, 42, a Shawano middle school teacher, had just made contact on his ham radio with the Shuttle Challenger as it made a pass over Wisconsin.

Bartoe and Anthony England sent random signals to earth as part of the Shuttle Amateur Radio Experiment, a spokeswoman at Johnson Space Center in Houston said today.

When the astronauts have free time, they signal Earth, she said.

For two days Hovey had been trying diligently to make contact with Challenger. He had turned his ham radio antennas on his home just right. He had plugged information into his home computer so he'd know the best time.

Thursday night, he sat with his two daughters, three former students, three Civil Air Patrol members and a few others trying to contact the Shuttle for about five hours.

They did the same thing Friday.

And then he had to go to a family reunion in

Please see Shuttle/A-2



Press-Gazette photo by John A. Robb

**Space contact:** Al Hovey, a Shawano middle school teacher, sits in his car today with daughters Carrie and Gwen. His daughters were with him

Saturday when shuttle astronaut John-David Bartoe acknowledged Hovey's signal to the Shuttle Challenger from his ham radio.

## Shuttle

Sheboygan on Saturday.

"Heck, I'll try it," Hovey thought, though all he had was a small mobile unit in his car.

So he checked his computer again to find the best times and wrote them down on a small piece of paper, which he folded and put in his pocket.

The radio signal from the ham operators in the Shuttle only can be heard for about seven minutes as it passes overhead about every 90 minutes.

So here was Hovey at the family reunion, running to his car every 90 minutes.

When 8 p.m. came, he pulled out his small piece of paper and saw circles and stars and the word "Best" scrawled over the time.

He was right and lucky enough to pick the right frequency.

At 8:15, he heard Bartoe say "This is WOORE calling earth."

Hovey gave his call signals and Bartoe responded.

Then the signal faded because the Shuttle is traveling at 18,000 mph.

Hovey said that's the first contact with a shuttle from a Wisconsin resident and might be the first from a mobile unit.

His interest in reaching the Shuttle began in 1983 when he tried to reach the Columbia. He follows the space program closely because he teaches science. He listens to all the Shuttle-to-earth transmissions re-broadcast over 14.295 on the ham radio dial.

In 1983, he heard astronauts sending signals, but was never lucky enough to get a response to his call.

This time, he was.

And he hopes to use that to encourage young people to get involved in radio and science, to get excited.

"I didn't relax this weekend," he said.

# Students have radio days

## Shawano school's ham station ends worldwide talking tour

By Rick Barlow

Press-Gazette

WA200BZW may have left the airwaves for good Friday night, but the memories of the many experiences shared around the world will remain.

The weeklong ham radio station at Franklin Middle School has been a good experience for those involved, according to Alfred Hovey Jr., trustee of the Shawano Schools Radio Club, which held the event.

"I think this has been a really good idea," Hovey said. "There's been a lot of interesting things that have happened."

Hovey said it was funny how some of the students clammed up when they sat in front of the microphone and how others talked so fast they found it hard to spell Shawano to listeners in Japan.

The students had originally set a goal of contacting all 50 states and several countries, he said. When they closed shop, they had made 1,602 contacts reaching all 50

states many times over and 57 foreign countries, he said.

"The contacts have been unbelievable," he said. A team of scientists from McMurdo Station in Antarctica called the station one night, he said.

Twelve-year-old Tania Paterick said she received a surprise when she contacted a man in Salinas, Calif., where her aunt used to live and near where her mother now lives.

"We just got to chatting on this thing and he contacted my mother living 35 miles northeast of Salinas," she said. "I heard my mom's voice over the radio!"

Emily Petersen, 12, talked with contacts in Indonesia and in Liberia in Africa but the signal was weak, she said.

"I'm just glad to be on the ham radio," she said. "I like to see how many places I can contact and make new friends."

Petersen said she plans to get an operator's license this summer providing she learns Morse Code.

Carrie Hovey, 12, reached Lima,

Peru, at the time when Pope John Paul II was visiting. She said she spoke with a station there that opened especially for the pope's South American tour.

"It was weird because you sometimes didn't understand what they said," she said.

Fourteen-year-old Joel Yeakey, who called the U.S. embassy in the nation of Guinea-Bissau located in northwestern Africa, said he'd also like to get his license.

"I could contact people all over the world without using the phone," he said.

Nathan Bosdeck, 12, became interested in ham radio after he saw Hovey carrying a portable ham radio around. He said he then got involved in the Radio Club. Bosdeck listens to Morse Code about 15 minutes a night to master it for the license. He also has to take a 30-question test.

Bosdeck said he called Russia, Sweden, Denmark and Indonesia. He also talked to a man in Northern Wales who was driving in his car.

"It's lots of fun talking to people," he said. "And it's a lot less expensive than on the telephone."

Even though the station is officially off the air, Hovey said they are receiving hundreds of letters from people returning radio calls. They will answer in the form of postcards that identify the station.

The station was started as a way to commemorate Wisconsin's entry into the union in May 1848. The Shawano Schools Radio Club applied to the Federal Communications Commission for a special "200" call sign to amateurs as part of the last phase of the bicentennial celebration of the U.S. Constitution.

Each state has been given a 200 number for one week to make radio calls across the country and the world. The program started in December 1987 and will run until the end of the year.

Twenty-eight Franklin students as well as amateur radio operators from the area were involved in the only station representing Northeast Wisconsin.