



Helping Hand

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Helping Hand is a column that focuses upon questions, advice, assistance and other items of discussion that our readership requires from time to time. This 'post-it' column will allow hobbyists to inquire about various aspects of radio listening and receive answers from the readership either directly or through this column.

Helping Hand Column - September 2009

With apologies to Christmas music and to Staples (Business Depot), "It's the most wonderful time of the year"! Well, that is if you're a SW, MW and/or LW listener or DXer. The days are getting shorter, almost at Vernal Equinox, the Solar Cycle is coming (hopefully), and another school year is upon us that should quiet down the area around your radio shack.

This month we begin with a question from Mr. E. Beben in Toronto who asks, "I am interested in any material on scanner frequencies for Toronto emergency services. Where can I get updated listings for the above? With thanks!" If you have a website that gives these frequencies, or a sheet that contains them, please let me know and I will pass on the info to Mr. Beben.

Harold Sellers sent me some comments on the use of FRS radio that appeared as part of my August **Beginner's Classroom** column that I'd like to share with you here. Harold writes, "In response to your comments in the August Beginner's Classroom about cell phones displacing FRS, I would share my experience with FRS handhelds. For hike leading they are much more useful than cell phones.

"FRS handheld units have a range of a few hundred meters in forests to perhaps a kilometre or more in open country. I and other hike leaders favour them for ease of use and reliability. In a group like the leader

and the 'sweep' carry the units and communicate as necessary. They work in locations where cell phones might not and communication is instantaneous; you don't have to find the other person's phone number, dial it and wait for the connection. And there's no concern about paying for the call!

"The only downfall I've found is that batteries can die midway through a hike. For that reason, I always carry spare batteries." Thanks for your comments, Harold. I must admit, I think batteries are probably cheaper than some cell phone bills as well. I guess this is one more instance where radio is still the choice option (although, please don't tell my students that their cell phone conversations actually go out over the airwaves)!

That's about all we have this month for **Helping Hand**. Please continue to help fellow hobbyists with their problems and questions. That is part of what makes this hobby a wonderful pastime – the people you meet, hear and see!

Until October,
73 JOE