

Aug. 1988 ✓

# THE RAMBLER

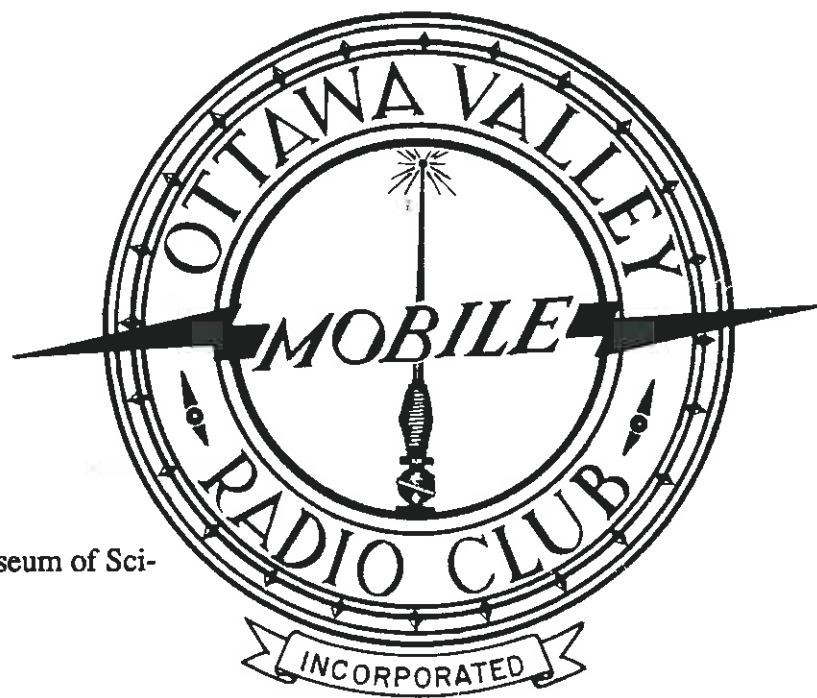
The Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club Incorporated

P.O. Box 5530

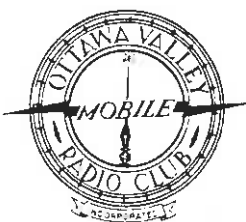
Station F

Ottawa, Ontario

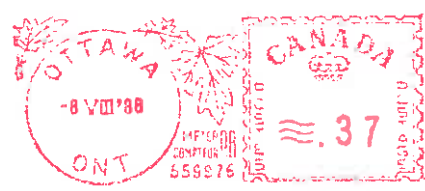
K2C 3M1



NEXT MEETING: SEPTEMBER 15, 1988 at the Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd.  
TIME: 7:30 P.M.



The Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club Inc.  
P.O. Box 5530  
Station F  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K2C 3M1



JIM HAMILTON VE3BJY  
2038 ARCH ST.  
OTTAWA ONT.  
K1G 2H1

**OVMRC EXECUTIVE**

1988-1989

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*Alan Boyce*  
**VE3LNH**  
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**Vice-President**

*Doug Carswell*  
**VE3ATY**  
 839-5854

**Past President**

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**VE3OAI**  
 836-5818

**Treasurer**

*George Dew*  
**VE2OWW**  
 777-3183

**Secretary**

*Archie McKenzie*  
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*Bob Baillargeon*  
**VE3MPG**  
 235-0187

**Technical Advisor**

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**VE3VLF**  
 728-5497

**Public Relations**

*Leo Desjardins*  
**VE3NVL**  
 225-0902

**Membership**

*Pat Brewer*  
**VE3KJQ**  
 820-9309

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# THE OTTAWA VALLEY MOBILE RADIO CLUB INCORPORATED

**CLUB SPONSORED ACTIVITIES****POT HOLE NET - OVMRC NET -**

Every Sunday, 1000 local time on 3760 kHz, SSB. All Radio amateurs are welcome to participate.

**THE WISE OWL NET - OVMRC NET -**

Rag chew net every Friday evening at 2000 local time on the club repeater VE3TWO - 147.30/90 mHz.

**VE3JW - Amateur radio station of the**

National Museum of Science and Technology. The OVMRC helps maintain the station and schedules operators for the station as part of an Amateur Radio public relations display. VE3JW operates on all HF bands, both CW and phone. Slow scan TV is also demonstrated. For information or if you wish to operate the station, contact the Public Relations Coordinator.

**LOCAL AMATEUR RADIO ACTIVITIES IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL:**

**POT LID NET** - Sponsored by Ed Morgan VE3GX. An informal slow speed CW net meets each Sunday (except July and August) at 1100 hrs. on 3620 kHz to provide and stimulate interest and proficiency in CW procedures.

**CAPITAL CITY FM NET** - Sponsored by the Ottawa Amateur Radio Club Inc. every Monday evening at 2000 hrs. local time. Conducted on VE2CRA repeater 146.94/146.34.

**SWAP NET** - Sponsored by Ed Morgan VE3GX, each Sunday as part of the Pot Hole Net, and each Monday as part of the Capitol City FM Net (except July and August). Ed may be reached at 733-1721 for listings and queries.

**THE MILITARY NET** - Sponsored and conducted by Frank, VE3MSC, Tuesdays at 2000 hrs. on VE3TWO 147.30/147.90 mHz.

**Membership** in the OVMRC is open to all those interested in Amateur Radio. Regular meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month (except July and August) at 2000 hrs. unless otherwise posted. Meetings normally take place in the auditorium of the Museum of Technology on St. Laurent Blvd. (south of the Queensway).

The OVMRC provides code practice 24 hours a day. Dial 825-0786.

Volume 31, Number 7  
August 1988

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## RAMBLINGS

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Welcome to the 1988/89 term of the Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club! A new year! Your club has a new executive. There are a few new faces around. If you look closely, you may notice one or two new things about the Rambler. But despite this newness, we seem to be faced with the same old problems; we still grumble about the same old things. "Why don't more young people join our hobby?" "Why doesn't someone run field day, or organize the club dinner, or come out to operate VE3JW, or run for office?" "Why does nothing change year after year?"

Why does the incoming president have to start each year with a tirade exhorting the members to show a little life? Well this is where it changes. I wish to announce that I am going to have fun this year, and if any of you wish to join me, you are very welcome. However, I am not going to waste a whole lot of time, energy, or space in the Rambler trying to convince you. There is no minimum contribution required to participate in the fun. It is not a clique with limited membership. Just come out and do what you feel like doing.

I believe that your executive is expecting to have fun. They have been bursting with ideas and proposals for the coming year. And the six people who showed up for field day had fun.

(\$100 worth of hot-dogs, chips, soft drinks, and cookies feeds six people very well!) I am sure that the August barbecue will be similar good fun. Many members of the club already understand the secret to having a good time. The people I am referring to have served on the executive or helped with unofficial activities in past years, and have earned the right to sit and have the fun brought to them. Ironically, though, these are the very folks who contribute year after year. They faithfully show up at field day to put up antennas or operate; they are always ready to operate VE3JW; they write articles for the Rambler, they run our nets; they prepare the coffee and organize the flea market; they help out with nominating committees; they accept a nomination when a position isn't filled. I would like these people to know how much their efforts have contributed to my enjoyment of the hobby.

Those of us who do choose to participate may have to rearrange our schedules for these activities, but if the activities are fun then it is worth it to us. With any luck some new people may join the hobby and we may have a few more activities this year. We may learn something, make some new friends, and (who knows?) do a little hamming in the process.

-Alan Boyce VE3LNH

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(Letter to Chris Holloway, Polar Bridge Expedition, from OVMRC Prez)

Dear Chris:

The members of the Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club wish me to convey to you and to your fellow adventurers our heartiest congratulations on your successful crossing of the arctic icecap. As we monitored your progress from Siberia to Ellesmere Island, we developed real admiration for your endurance and perseverance.

One of this club's stated objectives is to foster interest in Amateur Radio, particularly in mobile communications. During your history making trek, you made extensive use of Amateur Radio, operating while mobile from the Soviet Union to Canada. In recognition of the world attention that this has brought to Amateur Radio and to the services available through our hobby, the O.V.M.R.C. members have voted to support your expedition with a cash donation.

Please find enclosed a cheque for one hundred dollars payable to the Polar Bridge expedition. We are sure that it will be well used.

Canadian Amateurs hope that we might have another opportunity to work with you in such a mutually beneficial project.

Once again: congratulations and welcome home!

Alan R. Boyce  
President O.V.M.R.C.

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## EDITORIAL

### FROM THE DESK OF VE3CDS

Here we are in the middle of July and here we are writing an article for the new edition of the "Rambler". It has been quite some time since my XYL and I got started on the monthly task of putting the Rambler together. If I remember correctly it was 6 years ago that we undertook to type the first "skin" for the old gestetner type copier that we had. Our first attempt was a disaster, it just would not come out the way it was supposed to. A call to Lloyd VE3FHN finally got us on the right track and both the XYL and I thought what have we got ourselves into. The first few issues were a real challenge but as we went along it got easier to handle "skins" and the layout etc. became a little better organized with each issue. The printing was something else. Mike VE3LAR was the custodian, master fixer upper and operator of the marvelous machine that cranked out the Rambler. This operation went on for the first 3 years of our tenure as Editor. Like all good things the era of "skins" fluid and whirling wheels of the printer came to an end with the purchase of a electrostatic copier. We really went into the big time with computer printed articles, pictures, and whatever we decided to print. The first year of the big time, Russ VE3FSN took on the job of doing the printing along with Kathy. Those were pretty nice Ramblers. So here we are coming into the 1988 club year with a new executive, a new editor and a new desktop publishing

system to produce the Rambler. No more cut and paste to make everything fit, quite a change. The most important aspect of preparing the Rambler and the most satisfying feeling is to get good articles from the members. We have some good writers in the club and original articles are most interesting. I was quite surprised when I saw the number of articles in other club bulletins that had been copied from the Rambler. It is rather sad in some respects to see club bulletins decreasing as the cost of postage and printing keep going up. We should all make an effort our Rambler going with interesting articles. I feel that the Rambler is the thing that helps to hold the club together. What are you going to write about this year?

And so here we are, turning the job over to Bob VE3MPG and his band of printers led by Fred VE3NJJ. We will certainly be around to help and we hope you will be too. The XYL, Joyce and I will probably miss our regular frantic preparation of the Rambler but we appreciate the break. We'll be there if needed.

Thanks to all of you who have been so helpful during our term as Editor and Rambler Typist  
Joyce and Jerry Wells VE3CDS.

### FROM THE COMPUTER OF VE3MPG

That's right. From the computer of VE3MPG. This edition of the Rambler was done entirely by computer-the type you see, the spacing, the insertion of different typefaces within the text, and in the upcoming issues you'll see some graphics dropped into the text areas. The typeface you see here is 11 point Times. The fonts are licensed from Adobe. They are Postscript fonts, all with mathematically defined curves so they appear quite acceptable laser printed. The text was output on an NEC Postscript printer. The whole page set-up you see before you was set up on a computer screen as you now see it. Designing pages in this manner is much easier - no pasting up etc. What you see is what you get. There is also a choice of up to 40 different Adobe fonts on disk that you can scale to any point size. You're probably wondering what computer was used to accomplish this. The machine is the Amiga 2000. The beauty of this system is that when you submit articles for the Rambler you may now drop a disk off to me. The Amiga is capable of reading Commodore 64 word

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"The most important aspect of preparing the Rambler and the most satisfying feeling is to get good articles from the members" -VE3CDS

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processing files, Wordperfect Atari or MS-DOS (you must save these as plain ASCII when saving text) or Amiga word processing files. The only bottleneck at this time is reading Apple formatted disks. One alternative is to download your text to the Packet BBS. You may also use the traditional methods of typing on a manual machine or writing those articles out in

longhand. If any of you have other alternatives let me know.

In the upcoming months you'll notice a few design changes. They'll be subtle cosmetic changes throughout the Rambler. This issue will be the first test of the new system and of the new publishing committee. I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome them aboard - Fred Haire, VE3NJJ, Eric Still, VE3OTT and Don, VE3PUZ. You will notice that we now have an index on the inside masthead page. This hopefully will ease the task of searching through each Rambler to locate those information packed articles for reference. We'll attempt to keep the indexed subjects appearing in the same places for each issue.

Gerry Wells, VE3CDS and his wife Joyce have made the transition of duties to me virtually painless. The club applauds their efforts over the past six years for getting the Rambler out - through thick and thin! As Gerry says, getting good articles from the members made the job very satisfying. Couldn't have said it better myself. Get those articles in. Whatever the subject - packet, DX, homebrew, RTTY, AMTOR, slow scan, mountain-topping, 6 meters, 2 meters, licensing, pirates, new hams, old hams, satellites, computers,

hams in space, DOC, reviews of equipment, books etc. There's a few to wet those budding writers' appetites.

Thanks to the members and the executive for allowing me to serve the club as editor.



### FROM THE WISE OWL...

On September 5th, 1987 the wise owl net resumed operation for another season. The net was in operation until July 1, 1988. During that period, a total of 89 hams checked in for a total of 690 QNI. There were a total of 43 nets for a total running time of 2389 minutes (39.97 hrs). A special net was run and controlled by Sydney VE3GVI on Christmas Day. Thanks Sydney.

Beginning January 22nd, 1988 to April 1st, 1988, eleven qualifying nets were run and there were 12 recipients of CLASS A certificates and 6 recipients of CLASS B certificates.

As in the past, the Wise Owl NET is the place to meet new and old friends. Club announcements, CRRL bulletins and subjects of general interest to the amateur community can be heard. I hope everyone who participated, enjoyed themselves as much as I had pleasure in managing and controlling the net. I want to thank you all for taking part and a special thanks to Chuck VE3PAP and Jerry VE3CDS for managing and controlling the net during my absence.

Owl Net will be closed and off the air for the months of July and August 1988. Operation will resume again on Friday September 9th, 1988. As your net manager I am looking forward to meeting everyone again next September.

The Wise Owl Net can be heard Friday night at 20:00 hours local time on repeater VE3TWO on frequency 147.90/30. This is your net, together lets make it bigger and better.

See you all on the air.

Leo VE3NVL Net Manager

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*"If a person offends you, and you are in doubt as to whether it was intentional or not, do not resort to extreme measures; simply watch your chance and hit him with a brick."*

-Mark Twain

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*"Why should we subsidize intellectual curiosity"*

-Ronald Reagan

### NEXT MEETING.....

As promised, we are preparing a special program for September's meeting! The theme will be "An Introduction to Amateur Radio" and will feature presentations and displays tailored to the non-amateur. There will be information on what we do in the hobby, how to get started, how much it costs, and how to find out about courses. We are asking that each club member bring a guest. Every one of us should be able to think of a daughter, son, niece, nephew, paper boy, co-worker, neighbour, or friend who could be a potential ham, and who might like to know a bit more about this mysterious hobby of ours. Speak to someone now and circle September 15 on your calendar! Free refreshments will be served, and there will be a free raffle for all guests and anyone bringing a guest. The meeting is open to all, but in order to accommodate our younger guests, it will start at 7:30 (a half-hour earlier than usual), and should finish by 9:30. It will be held in the usual place: the auditorium of the National Museum of Science and Technology, off St. Laurent Blvd., on Thursday, September 15, 1988. Why not take this opportunity to introduce someone to a hobby that could give them years of enjoyment?

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*"Man is a dog's idea of what God should be"*

-Holbrook Jackson

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7th  
Annual  
AMATEUR RADIO COURSE



offered by



*The Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club Inc.*

The course offers:-International Morse Code  
-Canadian Radio Regulations  
-Radio & Electronic Theory

The course is held Monday evenings at Laurentian High School between 1900 and 2200 hours. Registration will be held September 12, 1988. Course fee is \$90.00 which includes all books and materials.

For further information call:

-Russ Pastuch VE3FSN 825-0796  
-Pat Brewer VE3KJQ 820-9309

## FIELD DAY 1988.....

For the 1988 ARRL/CRRL Field Day, the OVMRC operated Class 2C (Mobile) and turned in a score of 448 Points -- not bad for only six hours operation out of a possible twenty-four.

The statistics were as follows:

Band	Contacts
40 M phone	30
20 M phone	157
15 M phone	24
2 M phone	1
2 M packet	6

Special mention should go to Ed VE3VLF, who singlehandedly made and logged over one hundred phone contacts in two hours. Thanks to all those who braved the downpour to help out and operate:

Bob Baillargeon	VE3MPG
Bob Brown	VE3JDB
Alan Boyce	VE3LNH
Leo Desjardins	VE3NVL
Dave Harris	VE3KMV
Ed Leblanc	VE3VLF

A good time and many hot dogs and cookies were had by all.

-VE3LNH

## MINUTES OF JUNE 1988 OVMRC MEETING....

The meeting was opened at 20:05 by President Bill VE3OAI who welcomed about 40 members and guests. They included Vernon and Mary Lou Gagosz, Joe VE3PDS, Doug VE3CDC, VE3SCV and Byron Guptill. We hope they will become members and join in club activities. Fred Noble, VE3BAJ is reported to be recovering well and is expected to be back in full swing shortly, which is good news indeed. The 1988-1989 Operating Budget was approved by the members present.

Field Day will be a mobile event - Class 2C - a coordinator was not available to organize a conventional Field Day. PR Coordinator Leo Desjardins VE3NVL has arranged with the Museum for 3 vehicles to gather near last years' Field Day site. VE3JW will be the station call. Participants with mobile rigs are asked to assemble at 1:00 P.M. on June 25.

Vice-President Ian McIntyre, VE3CZ, said he had enjoyed his year on the executive and wished the new executive well. Leo Desjardins, VE3NVL, PR Coordinator mentioned that no operators are

scheduled for VE3JW over the summer and thanked those who operated during the last year. Treasurer Henry Greenway, VE3OMU, moved that Fred Haire, VE3NJJ, be appointed auditor. This was seconded by Past President, Vance Johnson, VE3OAO, who then circulated the revised Constitution with all the approved changes. Acceptance was moved by VE3LNH and VE2OWW. Pat Brewer, VE3KJQ, announced the Amateur Radio Course will start with Registration on September 12, 1988.

Dave Harris, VE3KMV, nominated Bob Baillargeon, VE3MPG, for Editor. The slate of candidates for the executive was approved by all present. Bob, VE3KLV, presented incoming President, Alan Boyce, VE3LNH, with the special key to the executive washroom to be held in trust! He in turn thanked President Bill Seyler, VE3OAI, for his excellent handling of the Club in the past year and presented him with the Past President's Certificate. Vance, VE3OAO, presented a gift of a 1988 ARRL Handbook to Membership Coordinator Pat Brewer, VE3KJQ, who is being married in June.

Door Prize winners were - 3rd prize Dena Johnson (Vance's wife), 2nd prize to George Caskey, VE3NJJ and 1st prize to Bryson Guptill a prospective ham.

## HOMETOWN BOY.....

Gandalf's Christopher Holloway and fellow polar trekkers arrived in Ottawa on June 1 after skiing 1730 kilometers across the top of the world. They were greeted by a cheering crowd of some 300 people, including fellow Gandalf employees holding a huge sign saying "Welcome home Chris!" Holloway works in the Network Integration Laboratory at 130 Colonnade Road. Gandalf gave him a leave of absence to participate in a Canadian/Soviet venture to ski from Siberia to Canada across the North Pole. The trek, known as the Polar Bridge Expedition, was the first crossing from the Soviet Union to Canada made on foot. No dog-sleds or snowmobiles were used, and each man carried a forty kilogram (one hundred pound) pack of food and supplies. They were re-supplied with food, rubber rafts, and clean underwear by six air drops along the way. The four Canadians and eleven Soviets stepped onto the ice at Cap Arkticheski in the Soviet arctic on March 3. They travelled the first few weeks in the darkness of the long arctic night, and encountered high winds, pressure ridges, and temperatures to fifty degrees below zero. Once the arctic spring began, they were faced with constant sunlight which presented new hazards in the form of sunburn, fog, and open water. They reached the pole on April 26 to be

greeted by over one hundred people -- diplomats, politicians, well-wishers, and fellow arctic athletes -- who had flown in for the celebrations. After two days at the pole, they resumed their hard trek southwards. The thirteen heroes stepped onto Cape Columbia on Ward Hunt Island on June 1, after ninety-one days on the ice. Throughout the expedition, the vital communications were provided by Amateur Radio. Scheduled contacts were made three times a day between the skiers and base stations in the Canadian and Soviet arctic, which relayed the messages to Ottawa and Moscow. Their location was also broadcast each day by amateur radio satellite. We used this information to plot the skiers progress on a map in the Cafeteria at 130 Colonnade. Chris is now resting after his adventure. We hope to see him back at Gandalf soon, and hear first hand about his trip into the history books.

-Alan Boyce VE3LNH

## RADIO'S TOMORROW.....

"It is neither wise nor possible to make definite predictions as to what the science of radio holds for the future. And yet, due to organized research and engineering development, it becomes possible to see hints which enable us to speak of the probable achievements of a decade or two hence with much the same security that the artillery officer, knowing how his gun is aimed, can discuss the remote, invisible target which he has every assurance he will hit.

For one thing, it appears to be only a question of time before the multitudinous problems of television must be solved and we may enjoy "seeing" as well as "hearing" the events of the world at our fire-sides. Another outstanding development of the next twenty years will undoubtedly be the availability of home talking movies.

On the commercial side, we will assuredly witness a vast expansion in radio circuits and traffic volume. The steadily increasing exploitation of short waves, particularly the virgin field of ultra-short waves, must provide many more channels than are now at our disposal. It is quite possible that new methods of wave propagation and reception may provide additional channels even among existing wave bands, together with still greater freedom from static and natural interferences. With increased communication channels we may expect radiogram service to all parts of the world, even to the smallest countries and farthest corners not now covered because of the husbanding of valuable radio channels for the more important traffic. If the present trend in facsimile transmission and reception continues its steady progress, it is likely that the time-honored telegraph operator with

his cumbersome dots and dashes will disappear by 1950. We may expect all radio messages to be handled in their original hand-written or typewritten form without recourse to the curt words of the present radiogram and without the delays and complications of the coding and decoding process of telegraphy. Photographs, drawings, fingerprints, commercial documents and other items will be flashed across the continents and oceans as a matter of hourly routine. It is even possible that newspapers may be reproduced in their entirety in any part of the world.

Radio telephony, as a public or toll service, is also certain to thrive. Today, the American telephone subscriber may speak over the standard telephone instrument to a telephone subscriber in almost any European country via the respective telephone systems and the transoceanic telephone link. Experiments with shortwave radio telephone links may point the way to a vast increase in the number of available channels, in which event the service must ultimately extend to many parts of the world and become relatively commonplace in business and social life.

In the broadcasting field, international exchanges of programs seem to be assured within a short period of time. Truly, one may look for advances in all branches of radio science, with progress continuing the even tenor of its way".

-MAJOR GENERAL JAMES G. HARBORD, *President, Radio Corporation of America.*

(Reprinted from RADIO NEWS August 1929, Volume XI, No. 2, from the collection of VE3MPG)

*"The one serious conviction that a man should have is that nothing is to be taken too seriously"*

*-Samuel Butler*

## ON GUARD FOR THEE.....

We as Amateurs, have had to work hard for our licenses. As a group, we tend to protect and police the privileges allowed by our license class.

When violations occur, it reflects not only on the violator, but on the whole Amateur fraternity.

In the event that a violation is noted on the Amateur bands, the following steps are suggested:

1. Tape the infraction.
2. Log the time, date, band and transmission type and length.
3. Report the incident to Communications Canada for processing.

**OTTAWA VALLEY MOBILE RADIO CLUB INC.**

# ANNUAL BARBECUE

**DATE:** Saturday August 20, 1988. (Cancelled in case of rain)

**TIME:** 2 P.M.

**PLACE:** At the home of the Secretary - 2042 Haig Drive, Ottawa.

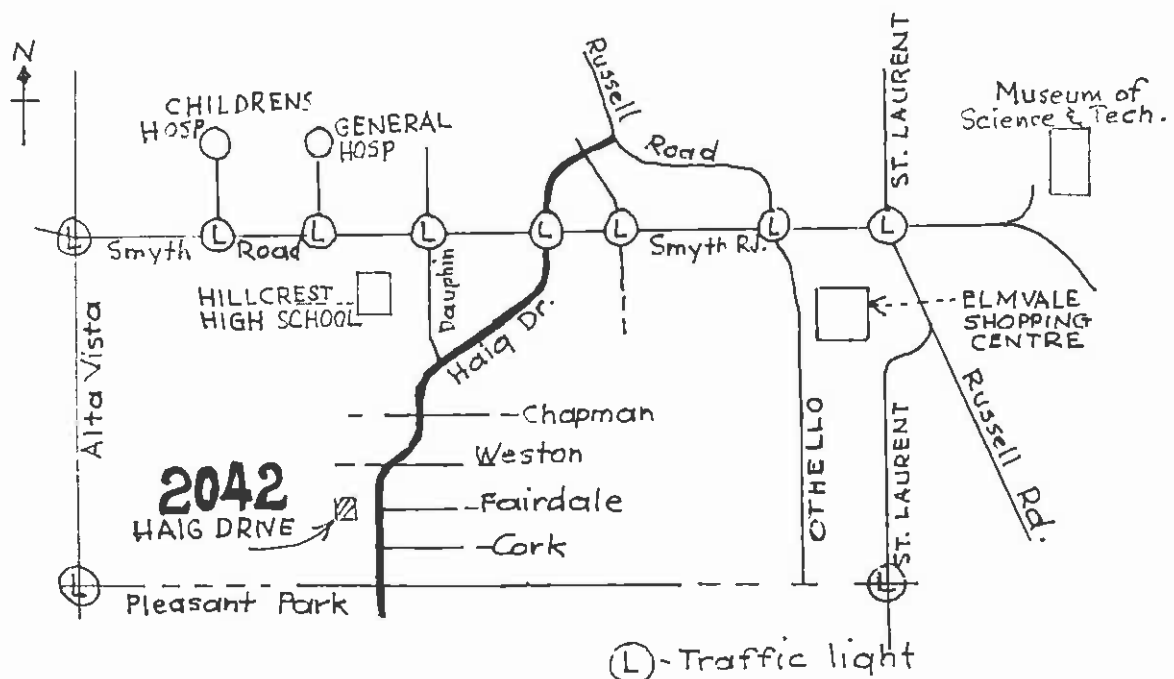
**NOTE:** Bring your own favorite hamburgers and /or hot dogs (and buns)

Bring your own lawn chairs.

The Club will provide condiments, lemonade, coffee and ice cream cones and of course the barbecues.

Please let us know if you are coming and how many will be coming with you. Bring something to amuse your children. (No swimming pool)

R.S.V.P. via the Secretary (Archie) at 731-3698 not later than August 15, 1988.





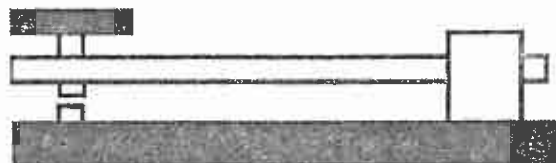


# ***Introduction to Amateur Radio***

**PLACE:** THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, 1867 ST. LAURENT BLVD.

**DATE:** SEPTEMBER 15, 1988.

**TIME:** 7:30 P.M.



SEE WHAT AMATEUR RADIO IS ALL ABOUT! TALK TO DISTANT STATIONS FROM THE MUSEUM'S OWN AMATEUR RADIO STATION.

SEVERAL DISPLAYS SHOWING DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE HOBBY WILL BE SET UP. LICENSED AMATEURS WILL BE THERE TO ANSWER ALL OF YOUR QUESTIONS.

FIND OUT HOW **YOU** CAN GET ON THE AIR TO ENJOY THIS WONDERFUL HOBBY.

THERE WILL BE A FREE RAFFLE AND FREE REFRESHMENTS FOR ALL GUESTS.

**BRING A FRIEND!**

*SPONSORED BY THE OTTAWA VALLEY MOBILE RADIO CLUB INC.*

I'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME OF THE SANEST, MOST RATIONAL, MOST OBJECTIVELY-STATED, CLEAR EVALUATION OF THE VALIDITY OF MORSE CODE IN TODAY'S AMATEUR RADIO OPERATIONS. THE FOLLOWING TEXT IS A MAJOR PART OF A MESSAGE THREAD IN WHICH PHIL KARN, KA9Q, RESPONDS TO SOME CLASSICALLY - GUNG-HO "WE GOTTA KEEP CW ALIVE" TYPE OF COMMENTARY SEEN TO DATE ON COMPUSERVE'S HAMNET MESSAGE BOARD. THE TEXT IS SOMEWHAT LENGTHY, BUT I BELIEVE IT'S SOMETHING THAT SHOULD BE READ AND APPRECIATED BY ALL ACTIVE HAMS, EVEN IF YOU DON'T AGREE WITH PHIL'S POINT OF VIEW.  
- NORM STERNBERG, W2JUP

OH BOY, ANOTHER DEBATE ON NO-CODE!  
MOST OF YOUR POINTS HAVE BEEN RAISED REPEATEDLY AND ANSWERED ELSEWHERE. BUT THEY KEEP REAPPEARING, SO I WILL KEEP ANSWERING THEM.

1. "MORSE CODE KEEPS OUT THE CBERS". PERHAPS, BUT WHY CAN'T A SUFFICIENTLY DEMANDING THEORY TEST DO THE SAME? ONE REASON HAM RADIO EXISTS IS TO TRAIN TECHNICIANS, OPERATORS AND ELECTRONICS EXPERTS. ANOTHER IS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE STATE OF THE ART. THIS PRESUMABLY BENEFITS SOCIETY, E.G., BY ENCOURAGING HAMS TO GAIN TECHNICAL SKILLS THAT THEY CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE ECONOMY AND THE NATIONAL DEFENSE. BUT MORSE CODE APPLICATIONS OUTSIDE OF HAM RADIO ARE FEW AND FAR BETWEEN THESE DAYS; MODERN TECHNICAL SKILLS ARE FAR MORE IMPORTANT.

NOTE I SAID "TECHNICAL SKILLS", NOT "TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE". IF YOU THINK THE THEORY TESTS ARE TOO EASY, I AGREE. THEY SHOULD TEST REAL UNDERSTANDING, NOT ONE'S ABILITY TO MEMORIZE AND REGURGITATE. BUT THAT'S NO RATIONAL JUSTIFICATION FOR KEEPING AN IRRELEVANT SKILL AS A BARRIER TO THE RIFF-RAFF.

2. "MORSE CODE IS ESSENTIAL FOR EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS". RIGHT. YES, I'VE CALLED IN LOTS OF EMERGENCIES FROM MY CAR OVER THE LOCAL 2M AUTOPATCH USING CW. UH HUH. SURE.

THIS ARGUMENT IS SO SPECIOUS IT'S DIFFICULT TO SEE WHY IT'S STILL AROUND. EVEN 15 YEARS AGO, WHEN I WAS ACTIVE IN BALTIMORE COUNTY RACES, ALL OF THE TRAFFIC WAS CARRIED BY VOICE AND RTTY. I WAS LOOKING FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO USE MY CW SKILLS BUT THERE WAS NONE. I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BUT IF I WAS IN A CAR CRASH I'D EVEN PREFER A HAM WITH A (GASPI) NO-CODE LICENSE CALL AN AMBULANCE THAN TO BE LEFT TO BLEED TO DEATH. (AS AN ASIDE, WE HAMS SHOULD FACE REALITY AND RECOGNIZE THAT MOBILE CELLULAR PHONES ARE PROBABLY ALREADY CARRYING MORE EMERGENCY TRAFFIC THAN ARE HAM REPEATERS. AND FEW CELLULAR PHONE USERS KNOW THE CODE.)

2A. "CODE GETS THROUGH WHEN NOTHING ELSE CAN". (OR, VARIOUSLY, "CODE IS THE MOST EFFICIENT TECHNIQUE THERE IS"). THIS MYTH IS SO PREVALENT THAT I'VE WRITTEN AN ESSAY ON THE SUBJECT THAT I HOPE TO PUBLISH. IF YOU COMPARE CW AGAINST VARIOUS COMPUTER-BASED DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES AND AGAINST THE THEORETICAL MATHEMATICAL LIMITS ON CHANNEL CAPACITY, YOU FIND THAT CW IS QUITE INEFFICIENT, BOTH IN TERMS OF POWER AND BANDWIDTH.

THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT THE \*EXISTING\* POPULAR DIGITAL TECHNIQUES (E.G., 1200 BAUD BELL 202 TONES THROUGH FM RADIOS) ARE EFFICIENT; FAR FROM IT. BUT DIGITAL SIGNAL PROCESSING (DSP) HAS ALREADY SHOWN HOW EFFECTIVE A "PROPERLY DESIGNED" TRANSMISSION SCHEME CAN BE. IF YOU WANT TO BE CONVINCED, SEE ONE OF THE DSP DEMOS GIVEN BY W3IWI, N4HY OR MYSELF. WE CAN SHOW YOU A DSP-GENERATED SPECTRAL DISPLAY WITH A PLAINLY VISIBLE SIGNAL THAT YOU CAN'T EVEN HEAR. MOONBOUNCE WITH A STANDARD OSCAR-CLASS STATION HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE, BECAUSE DSP

ALLOWED THE RELIABLE DETECTION OF SIGNALS WELL BELOW THE AUDIBLE NOISE LEVEL. TO BE EFFICIENT, ANY TRANSMISSION SCHEME MUST BE ADAPTED TO ITS CHANNEL, AND COMPUTER-BASED DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES ARE FAR MORE ADAPTABLE THAN THOSE THAT RELY ON HUMANS.

3. "THE CODE IS PART OF OUR TRADITION". SO IS THE SPARK TRANSMITTER, THE ELECTROLYTIC RECTIFIER, THE "COHERER" AND THE OLD LANDLINE MORSE CODE. SO WHY NOT REQUIRE EVERY HAM TO BE AS INTIMATELY FAMILIAR WITH THEM AS THEY ARE WITH THE INTERNATIONAL MORSE CODE? (WHAT? YOU SAY YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT A "COHERER" IS? SHAME ON YOU!)

THE ARGUMENT IS SILLY. TIMES CHANGE, AND TECHNOLOGIES BECOME OBSOLETE. BUT I'M NOT ARGUING THAT YOU TOSS SOMETHING OUT JUST BECAUSE IT'S OLD. OHM'S LAW IS OLDER THAN MORSE CODE, BUT YOU WON'T FIND ME ARGUING THAT IT SHOULD BE DROPPED FROM A LICENSE TEST. THAT'S BECAUSE OHM'S LAW IS A FUNDAMENTAL AND TIMELESS LAW OF NATURE; MORSE CODE IS A SPECIFIC TECHNOLOGY THAT HAS BEEN OVERTAKEN BY SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS. THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH TEACHING A LITTLE HISTORY AS PART OF LENDING A SENSE OF PERSPECTIVE TO WHERE AMATEUR RADIO IS TODAY, BUT YOU HAVE TO BE SELECTIVE. FEW HISTORY CLASSES CONSIST OF A DAY-BY-DAY REVIEW OF ALL OF THE NEWSPAPERS PUBLISHED IN A GIVEN ERA.

IT'S INTERESTING THAT YOU SHOULD PICK BRITISH ROYALTY AS A METAPHOR. IT SURVIVES PRECISELY BECAUSE IT KNOWS ITS PLACE AND DOESN'T GET IN THE WAY OF PROGRESS. IF IT DID, IT WOULD QUICKLY GO THE WAY OF THE REST OF THE EUROPEAN MONARCHIES. QUITE FRANKLY, IF I WERE BRITISH I'D CONSIDER THE ROYAL FAMILY TO BE AN ANACHRONISTIC EMBARRASSMENT, BUT THAT'S PROBABLY JUST MY CHERISHED AMERICAN TRADITIONS COMING THROUGH. SPEAKING OF THINGS AMERICAN: I AGREE, WE MIGHT AS WELL TOSS OUT THE ORIGINAL OF THE CONSTITUTION SINCE OUR CURRENT PRESIDENT HAS ALREADY DONE SUCH A GOOD JOB OF DEMOLISHING IT. LAST TIME I SAW IT AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES, THE INK IN THE FIRST AMENDMENT SECTION HAD ALMOST COMPLETELY FADED.

AS YOU CAN PROBABLY TELL FROM MY CALLSIGN, I HOLD AN EXTRA; I'VE HAD IT FOR 15 YEARS. I EVEN "LIKE" CW, AND I USE IT FROM TIME TO TIME, USUALLY DURING EVENTS LIKE FIELD DAY. SO YOU CERTAINLY CAN'T ACCUSE ME OF "SOUR GRAPES". THE REASON I SO STRONGLY FAVOR A NO-CODE LICENSE IS BECAUSE I SEE IT AS NOTHING LESS THAN ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL TO THE SURVIVAL OF AMATEUR RADIO. NOBODY IS TRYING TO BAN CW; YOU'RE FREE TO CONTINUE USING IT IF YOU WISH. (IN ANY EVENT THE "GREAT UNWASHED" WILL NOT BOTHER YOU DOWN ON THE HF BANDS BECAUSE INTERNATIONAL TREATY ALLOWS NO-CODE LICENSEES ONLY ON VHF AND ABOVE.)

SIGNS THAT AMATEUR RADIO IS NOT HEALTHY ARE ALL AROUND US. CONSTANT SPECTRUM GRABS. RESTRICTIVE TOWER ORDINANCES. AN APATHETIC (AT BEST) FCC. A HOSTILE ITU. AN UPHILL STRUGGLE TO GET THE PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING SOCIETIES TO TAKE AMATEUR RADIO SERIOUSLY, OR EVEN ADMIT TO ITS EXISTENCE. (I HAVE PUBLISHED PAPERS IN THE PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS ON AMATEUR PACKET RADIO, SO I KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT). I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT THESE ARE ALL SYMPTOMS OF THE SAME DISEASE -- THAT THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PUBLIC SEE AMATEUR RADIO AS INCREASINGLY OUTDATED AND IRRELEVANT TO THE REASONS IT WAS ORIGINALLY CREATED. WE \*MUST\* BRING AMATEUR RADIO UP TO DATE BY EMPHASIZING STATE OF THE ART TECHNOLOGIES SO WE CAN ATTRACT PEOPLE THAT CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THEM. AND THIS NECESSARILY MEANS THAT WE MUST FACE FACTS AND RECOGNIZE THAT CW JUST ISN'T AS IMPORTANT AS IT ONCE WAS. A NO-CODE LICENSE IS BY NO MEANS THE ONLY THING WE NEED, BUT IT IS AN ESSENTIAL STEP.

73, PHIL KARN