

THE OVMRC RAMBLER

Volume 36, Number 12 - December 1993

Up Up Up And Away

Written by Maurice-Andre, VE3VIG

Just as the lyrics of one of the Three Dimensions' signature songs says - "Up, Up and Away" aptly describes the Saturday, October 30th, 1993, balloon launch from Hawkesbury, Ontario. The launch, spearheaded by nine Montreal area amateurs, was planned as a three hour communications exercise which turned out to be an eight day affair !

The nine Montreal area amateurs who organized the launch divided the various project responsibilities as follows: Serge Lavoie, VE2HLS, Publicity, Information and Transmitter Hunting;

Gerard Paquette, VE2AW, Airborne VHF Repeater, Net Controller;

Leo-Murphy Burman, VE2LB, Hawkesbury Launch;

Norman Labossiere, VE2VAX, Technical, Equipment;

Robert Archambault, VE2SXA, Technical, Equipment;

Jean-Guy Renaud, VE2AIK, Montreal area VHF net on 146.700 for all tracking;

Martin Boissoneault, VE2MRX, Quebec wide VHF link system operator;

Louis Houbart, VE2GMH, HF Information Net Controller

Michel Chotard, VE2JEU, Coordinator.

The group learned much from the first launch which ended abruptly when the launched equipment literally froze in the severe low temperature it encountered at high altitude. As a result, the transmitter hunting team was not able to find, let alone track, the equipment. Nonetheless, the first launch was considered to be success as about 114 stations had a chance to "repeat" through the balloon's repeater - some from quite a distance.

The balloon's sponsor group did not waste any time in gathering, testing, and preparing equipment for a second launch. The second launch was undertaken with the cooperation of Environment Canada which provided the group with two weather balloons. It was an effort to demonstrate to Environment Canada that it was possible to gather more reliable weather information and relay it

in a wide area using airborne transmitters.

The group used the two eight foot weather balloons to lift a two metre transmitter, power supply and weather sensors, all of which had been sealed to protect the package against -60C temperatures. The unit weighed 1.8 kilograms.

The balloon was launched and started its climb into space at 11:20am. It did not take very long for 2 metre stations to start piling up and had to patiently wait to get a QSL from Gerry, VE2AW, Net Controller in Montreal.

The airborne repeater headed from Hawkesbury towards Joliette and Sorel. At Nicolet, the balloon had reached 47,000 feet, the temperature registered -57C and the jet stream was 240 km/p/h. These elements caused considerable problems in attempting to project a landing area. While recovery teams had left Montreal and positioned themselves around Drummondville, the anticipated landing area, the balloon kept on rising and was being pushed along by very strong winds.

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The Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club

RAMBLER

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The 1993-1994 OVMRC executive

President (acting): Larry Wilcox, VE3WEH
Vice-President: Larry Wilcox, VE3WEH, 747-5565
Treasurer: Richard Adams, VE3EIT, 749-2619
Secretary: Ernie Jury, VE3EJJ 728-3666

Standing committee chairs

- ✓ *Amateur radio exhibit:* Cy Webster, VE3SIY, 733-2371
- ✓ *Amateur radio training:* Bob Shaw, VE3SUY, 737-9443
- ✓ *Field day:* Allan Barnes, VE2TYJ, 746-5994
- ✓ *Flea market:* Lorraine Boulay, VE3VAT, 228-7111
- ✓ *Historical:* Mike Beausoleil, VE3BGP, 739-8871
- ✓ *Hysterical:* Neil Herber, VE3PUE, 829-4668
- ✓ *Membership:* See hysterical (don't ask)
- ✓ *Newsletter:* Dan Doctor, VE3XDD, 745-9214
- ✓ *Publicity and programs:* Dave Champagne, VE3QQQ, 567-9233
- ✓ *Radio operations:* Steve Middleton, VE3RUU, 731-6749
- ✓ *Technical:* John Pope, VE3ACI, 989-3629

Ramblerites

Contributors to this issue:

Maurice-Andre, VE3VIG
Brian, VE3MJD
Dave, VE3QQQ
Roger, VE3XRR
Ron, VE3UWR
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OVMRC Code Phone: 746-2065

Mark Your Calendar!

Next general meeting:

Thursday, December 16, 1993, at 1930 hours in the auditorium at the National Museum of Science and Technology. Voting will take place to elect a Club President, followed by a social evening.

Next executive meeting:

Thursday, December 23, 1993, at 1900 hours in the volunteer room at the National Museum of Science and Technology.

Deadline for the next issue of the Rambler:

Thursday, December 23, 1993.

Affiliated clubs

The OVMRC exchanges bulletins with the following organizations:

Augusta Amateur Radio Association, Augusta, ME
Border City Radio Club, Windsor, ON
CARF, Kingston, ON
CRRL, Arva, ON
Chatham-Kent Amateur Radio Club Inc., Ridgetown, ON
Calgary Amateur Radio Association, Calgary, AB
Halifax Amateur Radio Club, Halifax, NS
Heritage Amateur Radio Club, Cobourg, ON
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Sudbury Amateur Radio Club, Sudbury, ON
Saskatoon Amateur Radio Club, Saskatoon, SK
Thousand Islands Amateur Radio Association, Prescott, ON
West Island Amateur Radio Club Inc., Dorval, PQ

Sponsors

The OVMRC provides bulletins to the following organizations for their past support of our activities:
Bytown Marine, Ottawa, ON
Kenwood Electronics Canada Inc., Mississauga, ON
Seaway Communications Co., Cornwall, ON

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Ramblings

Wise words from our Acting President, Larry Wilcox, VE3WEH



Well, here it is nearly Christmas and another year is quickly slipping away. How time flies when you are having fun. Listening to the 2 metre band I have heard a few amateurs talking about the requirement for tower and antenna installation. There will be lots of excellent cold, snowy and stormy weather ahead to help us with all of those very important jobs !

Speaking of bands, we have not heard much from the HF'ers as of late. No doubt you are working the popular bands such as 20 and 40 MHz. Is there anyone on 10, 15 or 17 MHz ? The meager amount of time I have spent lately monitoring HF indicates a return to pretty good propagation, particularly with the colder weather.

I was recently invited to work 80 MHz by Bob, VE3YBC,

You Too Can Be A Wise Owler

Would you like to become a "WISE OWLER" ? Please note that beginning January 21, 1994, to April 1, 1994, anyone checking-in on the Wise Owl Net will have their call recorded and credited towards a CLASS "A" or a CLASS "B" WISE OWLER Certificate. During the aforementioned period, you will qualify for a CLASS "A" Certificate by checking into the net on a minimum of 10 separate dates. To qualify for a CLASS "B" Certificate you must check into the net on a minimum of 7 separate dates. These handsome decorative Certificates are usually handed out at the OVMRC's regular meeting in May.

from the Canadian Red Cross station located in their national headquarters on Alta Vista Drive. I must say it was quite an enjoyable experience! The station's call is VE3ZGR. As soon as Bob gave the station's call on air - he was working a pile-up. Although I looked after logging calls on the computer I do not recall all of the QSOs. The few that stand out - one from PEI, another from Colbourne, Ontario, and we talked with local hams - Steve, VE3RUU, and Tim, VE3QDX. Bob informed me that there are about 10 hams who operate the Red Cross Station at various times. Check them out on any of the bands and if you are fortunate enough to make contact, be sure to send them a QSL card direct and they will return one to you.

A reminder, the December 16th regular meeting will result in the election of a new club President. I urge each of you to attend this meeting and help elect the presidential candidate of your choice. We are not planning to have a formal program for this meeting but rather it will be a social evening for the enjoyment of all members. Come out and meet, socialize and enjoy each others company. Our normal refreshments - coffee, tea and cookies - will be served.

In closing, I want to wish each and every one of you and your families a very healthy, safe and MERRY CHRISTMAS and a prosperous and HAPPY NEW YEAR, 1994!

You're Invited To A Fun Party

Has the 2 metre intermod got you angry, frustrated and wondering which way to turn next ? Don't fret ! Coming up in January...a planned intermod filter building party ! Bring \$20 to pay for the parts and yourself and together we will build effective intermod filters. Many of you want to build or get these items but have found it is not easy to do alone. So, let's get together and build them. Will Warren, VE3XMT, will show us how to build these filters, using the parts he will be providing. Space is definitely limited and will be allocated on a first come basis. To register, contact either Jacques, VE3TSC, after 1:00pm at 748-6597, or Al Barnes, VE2TYJ, at 246-8924.

Minutes

OVMRC GENERAL MEETING
NOVEMBER 18, 1993

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1940 hours by the Acting President, Larry, VE3WEH. Larry welcomed our three visitors and two guests.

Assistance Required

David, VE3ZZU, asked for assistance in locating circuit simulation and analysis software.

December Meeting

Larry announced that the class of '94 has been invited to the next regular meeting. The December meeting will be largely a social evening after the election of a President. (Due to location of our meetings, there will be no alcoholic beverages permitted.)

Guest Speaker

The guest speaker for the evening was Bill Westbrook, VE3EKA, Chairman of the Telephone Pioneers Radio Club's Senior Video Repeater Committee. Bill spoke on his favourite subject - Amateur TV. He advised that his Committee has received two New Horizon grants to build an ATV repeater in the Ottawa area. The site chosen for the repeater is CJOH-TV on Merivale Road. The initial frequency plan calls for inputs on 439.25 MHz for AM and 1200 MHz for FM. The output will be 914 MHz FM. The longer term plan is for the repeater to be solely FM for technical reasons. The antenna will be polarized horizontally with an omni pattern and a 9.5 db gain to produce an effective radiated power of 1.5 Kw for a useful range of about 30 miles. The repeater, which is about 80% complete, will be fully

automated so as to minimize access problems. Some interference is expected from packet radio and traffic control radar testing. However, the latter is only temporary. Bill presented a list of equipment and skills needed to complete the station, and called for volunteers for the project.

Following a question and answer period, Larry thanked Bill for a most interesting and informative presentation.

Announcements

Larry announced that Sue, VE3SLC, who normally provides the coffee and cookies at regular meetings, would be unable to do so on this occasion. As a poor substitute, he suggested members may wish to adjourn to local coffee establishments at the close of the meeting.

Larry presented Doug Carswell, VE3ATY, who was elected as a Life Member at the last meeting with his gold life membership name tag. Larry congratulated Doug on his past and continuing efforts on behalf of the Canadian amateur radio community.

Presidential Election

Larry asked those members who had been nominated for President whether they were prepared to accept nomination.

Ed Sieb, VE3RDZ, accepted
Neil Herber, VE3PUE, declined
Richard Hagemeyer, VE3UNW, was not present to declare

Larry then called for any further nomination with the following result:

Dave Champagne, VE3QQQ, nominated Jerry Wells, VE3CDS. Seconded by Neil Herber, VE3PUE. Peter Noel, VE3DPN, nominated

Doug Carswell, VE3ATY. Seconded by Ken Barry, VE3KJB. Further nomination will be called at the next regular meeting before voting occurs.

1993-1994 Budget

A revised budget for 93/94 has been published in the Rambler because of some \$2,500 of additional and unexpected revenue in the form of royalties from the publication of "Amateur Radio for Beginners" and a donation of \$1,452.50 from the International Air Show held in Ottawa. Leo Desjardins, VE3NVL, moved approval of the budget as presented, and Steve Middleton, VE3RUU, seconded the motion. Mike Kelly, VE3FFK, questioned the \$1,500 for repeater maintenance. It was explained that this includes the purchase of 440 MHz equipment and crystals. Mike also questioned the \$200 allocated for field day expenses in view of '93 expenditures of \$500. Mike moved to amend the budget by increasing the field day allocation by \$300. This was seconded by Tim Eyre, VE3QDX. The amended motion was put to a vote and was carried which also approved the amended budget.

Motion to Purchase a Printer

The motion by the executive to purchase a Hewlett Packard Laser Jet IV printer was considered. Ed Sieb, VE3RDZ, asked whether changes in appearance of the Rambler recently are due to lack of a high quality printer. Al Barnes, VE2TYJ, asked whether a high quality printer need be purchased when there are desk top publishing firms that can produce high quality output from floppy discs. There was further discussion of other possible uses of a club owned high quality printer and of the

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Letters to the Editor

Bob Calver's article "Evolutionary Crisis In Ham Radio" which appeared in last months edition of the Rambler has generated considerable comment from club members. We have received some of these comments in writing and are pleased to include excerpts from these "responses" in this issue of the Rambler. Due to space limitations we are exercising an editor's privilege by reprinting selected portions of these written comments but, as much as possible, we have tried to maintain them in their original context.

Brian, VE3MJD, writes:-
In an orgy of pompous, pedantic overkill that would turn a politician green with envy, Kindly Bob piled every known problem afflicting ham radio today onto the arthritic, rapidly fossilizing shoulders of us cw buffs. Apparently, we have thrust our lumpish, largely worthless bodies against the pathways of progress. According to Enlightened Bob, cw is nothing but a nostalgic, useless idion without any redeeming characteristics. Paternalistic Bob concedes that there might be a few well intentioned but misguided souls among us, but as a race of no-gooders, we rightfully should be consigned to his new-age ovens, with Fireside Bob holding the matches, of course.

I wonder if Doomsday Bob has ever really tuned into the cw portions of the bands and listened to the thousands of operators banging out their rock music with wildly varying degrees of skill - old Buddy Bob should know that most of us really enjoy it ! It's another dynamic facet of our many-faceted hobby. There are arrogant elitists among the cw populace as there are in every dimension of our hobby. They are, hopefully, few in number and can be dismissed as egotists immersed in their own sense of self-importance.

We can't fight intolerance with intolerance. Aristotle Bob has some good ideas about upgrading the hobby, thereby keeping it in

the forefront of communication change and they should be debated intelligently.

Dave, VE3QQQ, writes:
The thing about Hams getting their 5 wpm and then being banished to the 160 and 80 metre bands where they cannot get a signal out unless they have a kilowatt of power and 2 miles of wire is a bunch of bull. If you believe this I think you should go to the CB band and stay there because that's where that kind of thinking belongs. I have sent signals with an antenna on the car (the antenna was 3.5 feet long) using 4 watts and talked to Andy, UZ3DXW, in Moscow and Steve, PA3GBQ, in the Netherlands.

Needless to say, I do think that executives of radio clubs should have at least their 5 wpm morse code endorsement. For all the new hams that don't want to get their code - they can stay on the 2 metre FM repeaters which is fast becoming more and more like CB. I am very discouraged at what is going on on the 2 metre repeaters.

For those of you who want to work AUTHENTIC RADIO, then get your code...get off your butts and do it. It is a documented fact that you can learn the morse code and pass the 5 WPM test within 10 days, so there is really no justification not to get your code endorsement.

Maurice-Andre, VE3VIG, writes:
Today, morse code is still the most reliable means of radio transmission. I trust that 50 years from now cw will still be in use. We may see a revised code not requiring as many letters as we have today, but we will have cw.

We have electronic keyers that shape our manually produced letters with a morse key. We have computer generated morse transmission and decoders. And we can bounce signals off of satellites rather than rely on ionospheric propagation. But all of these are subject to technical failures. And that brings us back to the old, reliable and simple hand-woven morse transmission. But who, in the future, will be able to manually send or copy morse code if we were to remove it from the licencing criteria ?

We don't put aside the learning to walk just because we have electric wheelchairs or faster means of transportation. We still use the drum to communicate. Anyone who doubts that can tune in a commercial radio station and listen to the music.

Morse code can be such sweet music; to hear your own call sign rolling off on the band with your personal intonations or that of your DX. Everyone has a unique way of sending code and can easily be recognized after a few QSOs. It is a personalized way of communicating, just like voice. Who wants to hear a ten

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Mobiling Across Canada

Written by Ron Clement, VE3UWR
and Roger Rose, VE3XRR

It was early in 1992 when I got a telephone call from my friend, Ron. He wanted to know if I would like to offer my services for the 1993 Canadian Scouts Jamboree. After a moment or two to consider Ron's offer, I said "yes !" The Jamboree was going to take place in Alberta, at Kananaskis Country to be exact. We looked forward to participating in this national event. However, little did we know what was involved.

In early 1993, Ron and I got together to start making our travel arrangements. We were going to travel by car, Ron's van, so a route was chosen and accommodation plans were made. We had to calculate how many kilometers we would travel each day, where we were going to stay, cost of gas and cost of food.

We had also decided to take along our new found hobby, amateur radio. Plans were made to install my Kenwood TS-450SAT HF rig in Ron's van. An antenna mount had to be installed and wiring had to be done. We researched reference material for 2 metre radio repeater frequencies along our chosen route.

Needless to say, our excitement was mounting !

The closer we got to departure time, the more frantic our efforts became to complete preparations. We kept procrastinating work on the antenna and, as a result, had to borrow Gerry Wells', VE3CDS, Hustler antenna. With all the

running around and packing done, it was time to start our trip.

July 3, 1993 - We were up bright and early and got underway.

For a couple of excited amateur operators, who took time to wire up the van, install our radios and borrow an antenna we surprisingly took quite some time to get some hamming done. We were having fun listening to the local radio stations along the way - most of it country and western music - which is what is called 'experiencing' the country.

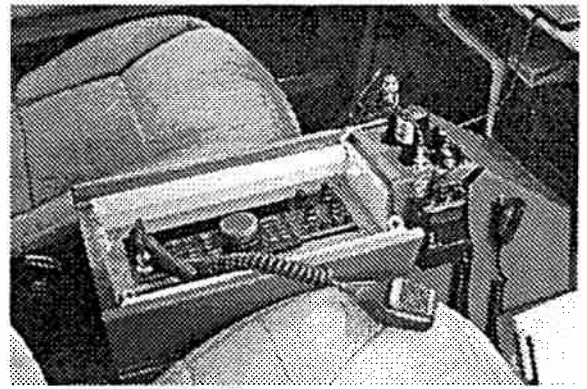
The first repeater we checked into was Point Alexander, but no one responded to our call. Our first contact on 2 metres was Steve, VE3SBD who responded to our call on VE3NFN repeater, 145.11-MHz. We had a nice chat with him while we drove through North Bay.

We then checked into a number of repeaters along the route - Temagami, Jumping Cariboo Lake, Long Lac, Thunder Bay, Swift Current, Medicine Hat, Calgary and Edmonton. We certainly enjoyed our QSOs as they proved to be excellent "company" and provided us with assistance and direction in finding accommodation.

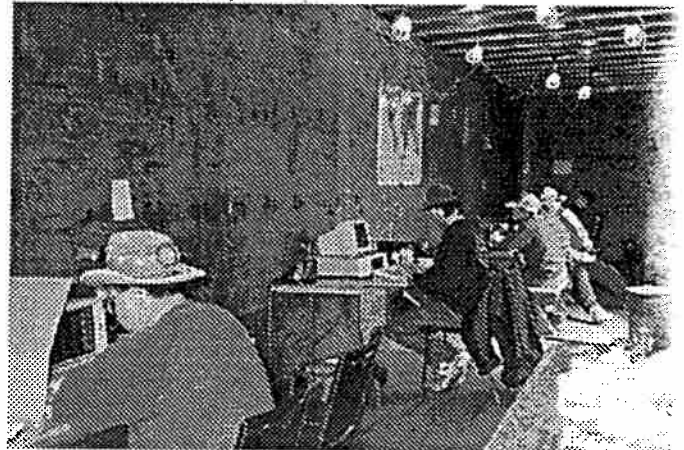
Our contacts along the route proved, beyond any doubt, that we live in a very small world ! Matter of fact, one of our QSOs in the Edmonton area was with Terry, VE3TQY/P6 who is from Kingston, Ontario.

At our first overnight stop, Rene Brunelle Provincial Park, we tried a few calls on HF. The 20 and 40 metre bands were lousy so we gave that up. We heard

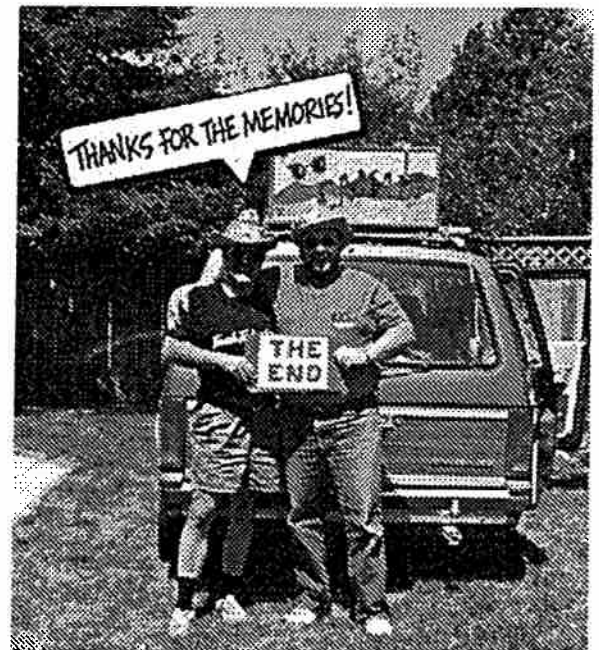
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This is the console Ron and Roger built into Ron's van. Roger's Kenwood TS450SAT was built into the centre of the console with their 2 metre radios on either side of the HF rig.



The Scout Jamboree's radio shack. The Calgary Amateur Radio Club converted this tractor trailer into a full-fledged mobile shack with packet, HF and 2 metre operations.



Back home again in Ottawa, Ron and Roger are appreciative of a very enjoyable trip and a memorable experience.

Up Up Up And Away

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In the meantime, on HF (7075KHz) Louis, VE2GMH, was logging position and angle reports from the airborne beacon (147.460 MHz). The charting of the balloons progress enabled Louis to inform those amateurs on frequency of the whereabouts of the balloons.

At 1:45pm the balloon was reported to be over Lyster, a considerable distance past Drummondville. The balloons finally reached an altitude of 98,000 feet and blew up due to the accumulated air pressure. At this altitude, the balloons had swollen to about 20 feet in diameter, close to three times their original size. When the balloons blew up parachutes automatically deployed to facilitate a regulated descent which had been estimated to last one and one half hours. A number of amateurs began to report angles to net control and for amateurs at home who were monitoring the frequency were able to plot the repeater's course.

It was at this point in time that a revised projected landing

area south of Quebec City was announced. A very determined retrieval team was advised of the revised landing area and they immediately relocated to Ste. Marie de Beauce.

The balloon repeater pushed by the jet stream was moving so fast that in no time it was over New Brunswick with a projected path towards the state of Maine. Probably due to the descent of the repeater, the Montreal control station lost contact with it and requested that a station in Montmagny assume control. It was not long thereafter that control was once again transferred - this time to New Brunswick. However, the exact whereabouts of the descending repeater was difficult to determine because of distance, land obstructions and its lower altitude.

Despite concentrated efforts by hams in New Brunswick, the downed repeater could not be found. As a result, a helicopter was used so that a search could be made of wooded areas. Flying over a wooded area near

Tracadie, New Brunswick, they spotted the transmitter's parachute on top of some pine trees. A ground search team was immediately advised of the exact location and were able to retrieve the equipment undamaged. In fact, they reported that the sealed unit was still emitting a faint beacon signal.

The equipment has been returned to its owners in Montreal!

In total, close to 450 QSO's were logged through net control. Of particular interest to OVMRC members, Ann, VE3TSB, was one of the more fortunate amateurs to be involved in a QSO through the airborne repeater. Ann had mentioned to Gerry, the net controller in Montreal, that she was a relatively new ham whereupon he encouraged her to have a QSO with an amateur from PEI who was also on the net. This experience has so enthralled Ann that she now wants to get her five words CW so she can enjoy the added privilege of speaking to distant amateurs on HF. Good luck Ann!

Letters to the Editor

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minute Beethoven sonata played in five seconds? If a well known author and composer would write a song or a symphony to your name and personal traits would you enjoy it, memorize it, repeat it over and over again? Like a good recording, Morse conversations can be exciting and relaxing.

Although the tom-tom and the smoke signals were early precursors of semaphore and

Morse code, they are a long way away from the 1,000 channel laser communications. We shouldn't dump acquired human skills, especially in communications, anymore than we should lose the ability to speak just because of the advent of artificial intelligence and speech synthesizers. I certainly would not call a person a "cromagnon" because they still use the spoken word for communicating

As long as Morse code is still being used to save lives and to ensure communications, through many types of interference, we should hang on to it. Besides, in a hobby that combines pleasure with responsibilities, it is a fun thing for a lot of us. So cheer up and

DAH-DAH-DIT-DIT-DIT

DIT-DIT-DIT-DAH-DAH

Minutes

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operating and maintenance costs of such a unit. It was moved by Gord Dewis, VE3XGD, and seconded by Daren Cowan, VE3OIN, that the motion to purchase a printer be tabled indefinitely, and alternative means be used to produce the Rambler masters. The motion to table was carried.

Len Gelfand, VE3LGZ, suggested the club investigate the availability of surplus equipment from organizations such as RMOG and Crown Assets Disposal Corporation.

Bill Edwards, VE3WCE, offered to produce Rambler masters on his high quality printer.

Chris Wiesner, VE3CUZ, offered to publish the Rambler on his electronic bulletin board.

Link Questionnaire

Larry announced that a total of 43 completed questionnaires on the linking system were

returned. Of the 43 replies, 20 were in favour, 10 were against and 13 were not sure. Because of the low level of interest, the executive had decided not to pursue the issue at this time. Discussion from the floor showed a much stronger interest and Larry suggested that a decision be deferred to the January meeting. Bill Monuk, VE3BDK, moved acceptance of Larry's suggestion and Dave Richardson, VE3DKU, seconded the motion which was carried.

Mike Kelly, VE3FFK, and Brice Wightman, VE3EDA, asked that an estimate of the overall costs to the OVMRC be made available if the club implemented a link and a network hub. The estimate should include both initial capital costs and annual operating and maintenance costs.

It was suggested that Peter DeWolf, VE3YYY, and a member of the repeater council be asked to

address the club at our January meeting. Ken Asmus, VE3MUV, offered to assist VE3YYY with the repeater association linking group aspects of the presentation.

Santa's Helpers

Santa's helpers volunteers are required. Please contact Jerry Wells, VE3GDS, or Larry Wilcox, VE3WEH.

HF Operators

Jerry Wells and Cy Webster are looking for HF operators for VE3JW on Sunday mornings.

Door Prize

The door prize was won by Tim Eyre, VE3QDX. The prize was a 4 volume set of the 1994 Electronic Engineers Master Catalogue, donated by Neil Herber, VE3PUE.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2140 hours.

Mobiling Across Canada

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WN4Z on 40 metres but no contact. We didn't try HF again until we were camped at Medicine Hat. We started with the 20 metre band. There was a lot of talking going on and it sounded good. We made a few calls and finally got a station in Los Altos, which is about 35 miles south of San Francisco. We had a very enjoyable QSO with Sam. W6EOA, on 14162. We then confined ourselves to a listening mode and even heard a station in Moscow and one in Lima, but we could not raise them.

At the Jamboree site, July 14th, we visited the now up and running ham station, CJ6JAM which is a special events call. The ham shack itself was somewhat unique. The Calgary Amateur Radio Club had converted

a tractor trailer into a portable shack and had it equipped with packet, HF and , of course, 2 metre radios. We were able to work the two metre rig and made a few contacts in the Calgary area.

The next day when we returned to the ham shack we were able to work a few CW stations on 20 metres: Rob, KD7H/9, in Berne, Indiana onn14008, and John, W6TQG, in South ElMonte, California.

That was the extent of our ham experience while on site. We had too much to do and so little time in which to do it.

On July 19th, we packed Ron's van and started on our way back home to Ottawa. During the next few days we enjoyed QSOs with

amateurs in Calgary, Swift Current, Regina, Dryden, Thunder Bay, Long Lac, Timmins, North Bay.

It is appropriate that we finish this article by saying that we truly enjoyed this trip. Despite some bad weather, the poor HF band conditions and all the driving, it was an experience we won't soon forget.

Our experiences include driving over 8,060 km, spending a fair amount of money for food, gas and lodgings, poor HF conditions, reasonably good 2 metre conditions. We soon realized that this type of trip is not the time to experiment with antennas. We were just too busy and by days end we were just too tired. We planned to do much more than we did - but then, there is always next time.

Potpourri

A sampling of news and comments from newsletters and newspapers from across the country - written by Jacques Choquette.



Kingston...

Amateur radio operators helped the OPP search for a missing elderly woman who suffered from a mental disability. She was found in a wooded area. The OPP were appreciative of the hams' efforts.

W5YI Report (USA)...

A 27 year old man from Roanoke, VA, has been charged with communicating false information by radio which had endangered the safety of aircraft in flight. He was also charged with using profane language in the radio transmission. He had allegedly transmitted false air traffic control instructions to aircraft at a local airport.

In the U.K....

Cellular telephones are causing problems in the electronic sensors used to detect out-of-bounds shots on the tennis courts at Wimbledon. The phones are apparently turning on the hydraulic pumps which are used to turn scenery at a musical theatre.

Halifax...

The Cabadian Red Cross in Halifax is looking for volunteers to form an emergency communications system and, once established, be expanded to

cover the maritime provinces and then the rest of Canada. Local amateurs have had a high degree of success in demonstrating that amateur radio techniques can provide such a system that meets the Red Cross needs.

Sarnia...

A helpful hint for bunny hunters whose antennas provide too much gain making it very difficult to find the bunny. Put an attenuator in line, it will decrease the signal to workable levels.

Things to avoid while grounding your station:

- 1) Hot water/heating system plumbing as electrical continuity might not exist.
- 2) Gas lines - these are dangerous and HF grounding is questionable.
- 3) House wiring - neither the neutral(white) or ground(green) will work. They will just induce an AC hum.

Calgary...

At 0030 hours on August 22, 1993, 5 local men who had travelled to a remote island near the North Pole made what is believed to be the world's first Pole-to-Pole radio call. The ham radio operators had made contact with a French scientist in the South Pole, an estimated 17,600 KM away.

Ottawa (OARC)...

Some local hams tried a rather unique direction finding apparatus. Two yagi beams, connected to an oscilloscope, were installed onto the sides of a van. The graphic display was thus able to give a precise direction of the transmitting station.

IPARN (VE7NET)...

IPARN recently visited Nova Scotia to discuss connection details with advisory groups, repeater owners and amateur clubs. The meeting was considered by all to be a big success. In fact, they have already started with the recent purchase of a satellite antenna. IPARN now has 1,200 members. Only 400 more are required (200 from the maritimes and 200 from the rest of Canada) to start construction and installation of a satellite earth station. By joining IPARN, your membership will help towards joining all of Canada into the system.

Computing Now...

On August 8, 1993, while on a kayak trip in the N.W.T., a man found himself out of food, in foul weather and 120 KM from the nearest help. Using his pocket distress beacon, he signal for help. Twenty minutes later, the Mission Control Centre at Trenton, Ontario, had an exact fix on his location. A beaver float plane was dispatched to the spot and rescued the man.

Malibu, California...

After 108 hours of continuous operation during the recent fires an amateur radio net finally shut down. It had been set up to answer telephone calls from all over the country and the world. They calmed quite a few people with details of whether friends or family had been in danger. Hams did more than just talk. Their lives were in danger while staffing the communications van. Several hams also handled fire hoses.

Why I Joined RAC

Written by Ed LeBlanc, VE3VLF

Well, I did it. I joined the Radio Amateurs of Canada. After spending about ten years in the "wilderness", I have once again become a member of a national amateur radio organization.

When I first became licenced, I quickly joined the ARRL (which later became the CRRL), CARF, the amateur radio association of my province and my local ham club. Mid-way through my university years, I allowed my memberships to CRRL and CARF to lapse, due to the financial limitations of being a student and a curtailment of my ham activities due to my studies.

Upon entering the working world, I reactivated my involvement in organized amateur radio by joining the OVMRC. However, I decided to put off joining a national organization.

As long as I have been licenced, a lot of discussion has occurred over the years regarding having a single national amateur radio organization. The main plan always involved having CRRL and CARF merge to form a single entity. Despite the fact that most amateurs agreed that a single organization was needed, it was clear from the start this wasn't going to be easy. Plenty of sparks were generated over how this was to come about. In fact, during the final years of the two organizations, there seemed to be much "finger pointing" over who was obstructing the merger process.

Myself, like a lot of hams, refused to join CRRL or CARF until the merger took place. This way, I reasoned, there would be a group of us holding out and thus putting pressure on the two organizations to continue the merger process to completion. Now that the merger has happened, it was time to put my money where my microphone was.

Now that we have a brand new organization, the need for Canadian hams to support it is very important. Amateur radio is one of the few hobbies in our nation that is regulated by government. This is primarily due to the fact that ham radio depends on a natural resource controlled by all world governments. Our hobby is also beginning to be regulated by local governments in the form of antenna and tower restrictions.

The fact of the matter is that the amateur community is not the sole master of its fate. The community must work with the governing authorities to ensure that the interests of the radio amateur are heard and preserved. The work of organized radio amateur groups is a key element in this process and RAC will play an important role.

In dealing with governments, one is entering into the political realm and in entering into such a realm numbers talk. Fortunately, the ham population in Canada has been skyrocketing to new heights, surpassing the 40,000 mark. However, if all of these people are unorganized they cannot speak with a loud, single voice to the government of the day. Hence, they will be taken for granted or simply ignored.

This is why it is very important for every ham to seriously consider joining RAC in order to give the amateur community the ability to focus its growing numbers into a strong force. This will greatly enhance our ability to promote our interests in an increasingly competitive communications environment. From what I have read so far, less than 25 percent of Canadian amateurs belong to RAC. So come on all of you who have been waiting for a single national organization. We now have good one and your membership will make it even better !

It's A Special Xmas Day Net

Mark your calendar now as a reminder of a very special Christmas day net. Yes. Christmas morning at 9.30 am on repeater VE3TWO, 147.300 +MHz Net Controller Sydney Moorcroft, VE3GVI, will be looking for your check-in to offer you an opportunity to wish all your amateur friends - a very Merry Christmas !

Certificates Not Claimed

The following amateurs have not picked up their "Wise Owl Qualifying Certificates". Please see Leo, VE3NVL, at any OVMRC regular meeting to pick up your certificate. Certificates not claimed by the end of June, 1994, will be destroyed. The following is the list:

VE2JHT, VE3CDS, VE3KJQ, VE3MJD, VE3NFY, VE3OFM, VE3OFV, VE3OMU, VE3SKP, VE3XIU, VE3ZEZ.