



December 2002

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The Hamilton Amateur Radio Club
 PO Box 91215, Effort Square PO
 Hamilton, ON L8N 4G4
 Est. 1932 Inc. 1956

The Hamilton Amateur

The Hamilton Amateur Radio Club Newsletter - 70 Years of Amateur Radio 1932-2002

We're #2!

David VE3STT - Editor

Each year Amateur radio operators located in all the ARRL/RAC sections gather on the bands for the ritual known as RRL Field Day. And, for the first time ever in 2002, Field Day also included any other IARU Region 2 DX entries. According to QST magazine, entries were received from several new countries joining the fun in late June - Cuba, Panama, Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela and Chile. And for the second time ever, the "outer space" contingent was represented with 136 QSOs made with the International Space Station during Field Day weekend!

As always, part of the post-contest/operating event fun is to check the scores and see where "we" placed. You'll be happy to know that once again VE3DC represented the club in fine style, by placing second (outside of the US) in the "4A" category with a score of 4,584, as tabulated in the December 2002 issue of QST. We followed the Brownsgurg-Hawkesbury ARC club VA3CWB with a score of 5,298.

By the way, the top claimed score in the "4A" category was 20,112, submitted by W2GD.

The overall number of entries in the 2002 Field Day competition were up substantially as a result of the new Region 2 inclusion and another incentive to launch GOTA stations (Get On The Air) instead of the old rules referring to Novice/Technician stations. That alone added another 428 stations. The combined number of entries this

year reflected participation by some 34,498 persons, an increase of roughly 9% over the previous year.

Congratulations to all of the HARC operators and club members who played a supporting staff role in this past Field Day and to the overall organizer of the event, David VE3DWJ.

Next meeting's Speaker

*** Please NOTE - No monthly meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 18th ***

December 12
"HARC Christmas Party"

On Thursday evening, December 12, 2002 members of the HARC that have purchased advance tickets will enjoy the spirit of the season at the Royal Hamilton Yacht Club on the waterfront of Hamilton's harbour. Details are elsewhere in this issue of The Hamilton Amateur.

It's always a great way to get out and on the bands, meet other members and, in some cases, get that first taste of contest operating at the rig!

If you would like to see for yourself, I obtained the URL for the 2002 Field Day results. You can find them online at the following location:

<http://www.arrl.org/contests/results/index.html#2002>.

If you missed it, you missed another great time. Please make plans to be part of the festivities in 2003. As mentioned, it's a great place to get your "feet wet" in the world of Amateur Radio!

Club meetings - 3rd Wednesday each month (except July and August) - 8pm in the St. John's Ambulance Association building, 500 Upper Wellington Street (on the Mountain). Park behind the St. John's building, NOT the Police station. Complimentary refreshments!

Contesting

David VE3STT – Editor

I don't usually place my Contesting column as close to the front in The Hamilton Amateur, but it's well worth noting a couple of key achievements of the VE3DC contest group that have come to light in the last couple of weeks.

2001 RAC Canada Day Contest

According to results just released in the latest edition of RAC TCA magazine, VE3DC placed first overall in the Multi-Op/Multi Transmitter (MM) category in the 2001 RAC Canada Day Contest. Although the release of the contest results was delayed considerably, it obviously was well worth the wait for the crew that operated the contest!

VE3DC earned a coveted plaque, donated by RadioWorld for the victory. The VE3DC score of 988,388 outpaced VE5RAC with 981,272 and VY2RAC with 753,840. That is significant in that the use of an RAC call makes that group more valuable to other competitors, in that the ARC call is worth 20pts to the normal 10pts for any other Canadian station.

Since the results were delayed, the VE3DC group is hoping for similar success in the 2001 Canada Winter Contest and the subsequent Canada Day Contest earlier this year.

2002 CQWW 160m Contest

And, hot on the heels of that news, came the release of the results of the CQWW 160m Contest. VE3DC submitted another Multi-Operator (MO) entry for the SSB contest and placed First in Canada and an impressive Fifth Place in the World!

Our score of 208,256 was just short of entries from the US in fourth and Ireland in third. The traditional Mexican powerhouse of XE1RCS placed second with a score of 299,840, just short of the overall MO winner UU7J, from Russia, with a score of 306,878.

Important points

Executive Meetings

HARC Executive committee meets each month, except July and August at Mohawk College in room E031A. All members are invited to attend and participate. The meetings are scheduled monthly to fit the schedules of the Executive members.

VE3NCF [146.760- & 444.075+ MHz]

HARC operates VE3NCF repeater, located atop the Niagara escarpment. It's open for use by all Amateurs. Special features are a privilege of membership. VE3NCF is part of the VE3RPT link system.

Check-In and Swap nets

HARC "net" is held every Tuesday evening, except July and August, at 7:30pm. HARC "swap net" follows at 8pm.

Examinations

Amateur radio licence examinations are conducted the second Wednesday each month, except July and August. Contact the voluntary examiners to make an appointment. Each test \$3.

Membership Information

Club membership, including all privileges, is \$25 per person, per year, Sept 1 to Aug 31. Additional membership, for immediate family living in the same home, is \$1 per person. One newsletter sent to each address.

The Hamilton Amateur

The Hamilton Amateur is published ten times each year (not in July or August). Deadline for article submission is the *last Saturday* of the month for the next month's issue. Preferred format is .txt file. Articles will be checked for spelling and grammar, but the author is responsible for the factual content. E-mail submissions to David VE3STT at ve3stt@rac.ca

Not to split hairs, but DX stations enjoy a somewhat significant advantage in the 160m contest because of a "DX Window." Having experienced it first-hand, it's a bit aggravating to hear

XE1RCS sitting in the DX Window, in the clear, and running hundreds of US stations, while we duke it out with every other station on the band outside of that window. XE1RCS is as close to the US as we are, yet enjoys that advantage.

An even more significant note is that, according to the rules for the next CQWW 160m Contest, the "DX Window" has been eliminated!

Either way, VE3DC is planning to mount another effort this season in the 2003 contest!

Next on the contest agenda, by the time this reaches your hands, will be the annual ARRL 10m Contest the weekend of December 14th and 15th. That's always a fun time because there is so much room to stretch out and enjoy things on the 10m band. Try it!

And, please don't forget to get on the air for the next RAC contest. The annual 2002 RAC Winter Contest will take place the 24-hours beginning 0000z December 28th. VE3DC will once again be "Loud and Proud" and could use every contact on every band you can muster between 160m and 2m (except WARC bands, of course!)

Annual HARC Christmas Party

Fred VE3GCP – Secretary

On Thursday December 12 the members of the HARC will gather to make welcome, their fellow members and guests at this years Christmas dinner. The annual event will be held this year at the ROYAL HAMILTON YACHT CLUB located on the shore of Hamilton Harbour. Emsley, our past president, and Murray Thompson, a club director, are organizing the event. A lovely Christmas diner has been planned and this will be a great opportunity to meet some of the other family members from the club.

The cost is \$25 per person and it is not mandatory to bring a guest. Based on ticket sales thus far, we expect this event will double the attendance of last years party. At 6:15 we will begin our

social hour and then sit down for a lovely dinner.

Surely the ladies will ask what they should wear so I got some expert advice. The men are asked to sport a shirt and tie, (jacket optional) and the ladies will be "dressy casual", I'm told that means slacks are just fine.

We have some nice prizes planned but I'm sorry that we have decided not to have any speeches for you to sit through (please forgive us). If you have not yet booked your seat(s) please contact Emsley, Fred or Murray as soon as you can so we can let the caterer know how many guests we will have. Our phone numbers and email addresses are listed in this bulletin and we could get your payment at the door.

I am looking forward to seeing you there, but if I don't have that opportunity, please allow me to extend my best wishes for the Christmas season to you and your families at this time. Merry Christmas and a wonderful new year to you all.

HARC "Check-In" and "Swap Nets"

Don Grisenthwaite VE3DDQ

The last "Check-in Net" and "Swap Net" for the Hamilton Amateur Radio Club will be take place on December 17th and will resume on January 7, 2003.

Ads on the Swap Net that are current as of December 17, 2002 will be extended two additional weeks.

And, Amateur radio station VA3CWM is looking for HARC members to operate the station at the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum. We are in the process of setting up a schedule and if any HARC member would like to volunteer some time, a couple of hours, half a day or the whole day, we would like to hear from you. The museum is open daily from 9:00am until 5pm. If interested please get in touch with Don VE3DDQ at 905-388-1365 or Frank VA3FWL at 905-679-4524.

HARC 2002-2003 Executive

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RAC Ontario SM re-elected

The following note was submitted as e-mail to ve3dc@rac.ca

Robert (Rob) McKenzie VE3SJQ (*who is on our mailing list and receives The Hamilton Amateur every month...ed*) was recently re-elected Section Manager for a two-year term that will begin on March 1, 2003 in the Ontario Section. Rob ran unopposed, eliminating the need for a balloted election.

November minutes

Fred VE3GCP – Secretary

The minutes of the General Meeting held Wednesday, November 20, 2002 follow:

As is the custom, the meeting began at 8pm with greetings from our president Mike Krebs.



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After the formalities a new member was introduced, he is VA3PPP Peter Platter. We promptly then moved to introducing our guest speaker. I was pleased to explain that I met Reg Bagshaw VE3BQQ, at our recent HARC Flea Market. Reg had a table filled with all sorts of gear for the hobby of radio controlled model aircraft so I went to speak to him. He turned out to be a very interesting fellow and his model aircraft gear was intriguing. Well, the rest must be obvious since he brought a display of his RC equipment to the club and gave a very knowledgeable talk. There where a great many questions and in fact we invited the members to approach Reg during the break.

An announcement was made about the Christmas Party which will be in lieu of the December meeting and a large number of tickets where sold during the break.

After the break for Donuts & Coffee (VE3DC) resumed its meeting with the business meeting. Mardy gave his education reporter. There is a current course which will run until February and it's not too late to jump in now if you wish. There is no course for the Advanced being run at this time. Mardy is also the membership chairman, but he did not have a formal report at this time because the influx of memberships for the new club year has not been finalized.

One special note is that *persons who have not yet paid their 2002/2003 dues will not receive a bulletin after December.*

Mary Urbanski VE3OGQ gave a Health and Welfare report that included the following: cards of sympathy were sent to family members in respect of the passing of Bill Sawyer VA3WS and Ward Gilson VE3FYQ. A get well card was sent to VE3RN Roland Norton who has recently been in hospital.

It never gets boring, but once again Rick Danby advised us of the contest groups successes. This month we received an award from RAC in recognition of achieving the highest score in the Marconi Centenary Contest. The award included a special issue "2 Pound Commemorative Coin." Some mention was made about the results of Field Day being published in some Amateur publications, but the executive has no official results at this time. If you see the results published or find them on the Internet please advise our executive.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15pm.

MS-Dos "end of life" Dec. 31/2002

David VE3STT – Editor

I was reading through some messages forwarded to me from the many reflectors to which I subscribe and came across an interesting note from Jim AD1C, who (if you don't recognize the call) is one of the primary people lending support to the contesting

Hamfests

Hamilton Amateur Radio Club Hamfest 2002

*Thanks again to all our club volunteers!
And, THANK YOU TO EVERYONE THAT ATTENDED our annual Hamfest!*

See you in 2003

NPARC Big Event 25

Niagara Peninsula Amateur Radio Club
CAW Hall, 125 Bunting Rd.,
St. Catharines
SATURDAY, FEB 1st/2003!
Admission: \$6
Talk in: 147.240 MHz

Burlington Spring Flea Market

Burlington Amateur Radio Club
Royal Canadian Legion Hall, 828
Legion Rd., Burlington
SATURDAY, MAR 1st/2003!
Admission: \$6
Talk in: 147.210 MHz

For the latest information, about these and other hamfests, visit the RAC website (linked off the HARC website (URL on the front page)!

program CT, along with the author K1EA of course. Jim included the following note:

A lot of us rely on DOS for our contest logging. According to Microsoft's policies, all support for DOS and Windows 95 ended on 31 December 2001 and product end-of-life follows one year later:

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/lifecycle.msp>

Of course, this doesn't mean much, since as long as we have DOS floppies and PCs that can load them, we can continue to build DOS-based logging systems. Has anyone experimented with any of these DOS replacements (in a contest environment)?

Jim then went on to talk briefly about possible alternatives, mentioning Dr-Dos as a potential candidate. It's curious that, in this day and age, Dos is

still such a fact of life in the "cutting edge" of contest logging software, although those days are certainly changing too. CT now comes in a Windows form that requires Windows 98 or better, and several other programs have changed to the newer Windows platform as well.

The trouble, and I am by no means a computer expert, is that the Windows platform seems to grab more control of the serial ports on your computer, making things like sending CW and voice through those ports a wee bit tough.

Another e-mail, responding to Jim's original, stated that the larger concern might be the fact that computers themselves have been making quantum leaps of late and things like ISA and even PCI slots are all but history on the more modern motherboards.

The recommendation was NOT to toss out your 486 and early Pentium computers, rather hoard them for use as logging machines in your shack. That is, until the next "quantum leap" in contest logging software – which will come in time!

Tower-climbing safety

The following note was submitted as e-mail to ve3dc@rac.ca

(With the cooler/cold weather upon us, it's even more important now to practice tower-climbing safety, if and when you have to take a trip up!

I came across some very interesting observations from a couple of Amateurs on just that subject, spawned by a discussion about whether to use a climbing belt alone, or more. In my research before buying gear to go up my tower I was told that the only acceptable means of securing ones self to a structure is with a full-body harness, which is what I now use!

The first part was written by Eugene Jensen K2QWD, and taken from the Towertalk reflector. Eugene then refers

to some additional material on the same subject submitted by Phil KB9CRY.

And, of course, this is only one man's opinion. Please be careful out there!....ed)

Part One:

After almost 20 years in industrial plants using safety equipment professionally, I have an observation. Regardless of manufacturer, I personally take old and new employees out on a regular basis and we play "Peter Pan" with the plant crane. My observation is that one should never put on a climbing harness without checking it out on a crane or a lifting fixture first.

What I have seen, and it is always amusing, is that you are being choked, turned sideways, and all other possible positions until these things are properly adjusted and set up. And they have to be set up specifically to the individual involved who is using it. It is extremely important due to the different manufacturers of these devices. I just believe that you cannot strap one of these things on, and then have your life depend on it. Because when you are any distance above the ground, you are going to be in deep trouble if they are not functioning correctly. The biggest problem I see is that they are usually fitting too loosely, or are installed incorrectly, which allows the body to slide into all sorts of weird positions, the results of which could be fatal.

Always have someone with you to make a call to bring help quickly if anything goes wrong. Be safe and live long!

Part Two:

If I may add my two cents; First, besides being a chemical process engineer, I have 15 + years experience in Industrial Health & Safety and OSHA compliance.

I personally use a MSA full body harness that features a back D Ring, between the shoulder blades, and two side hip D Rings. It also has thigh and butt straps. There is no belt (later on that). I, like others, don't like falling, and make it a habit to be always clipped on, even when climbing. I use two connection devices.

HARC 2002-2003 Chairs

Awards/Volunteer Examiner

Lorraine MacPherson VA3NZ
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Public Liaison Co-Chair

Neil Galloway VE3VNG
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Repeater

John Vandenberg VE3DVV
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Swap Net Control

Frank Love VA3FWL
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gorilla hook, with safety latch mechanism. I clip the gorilla hook to a tower member and can then lean back freeing both hands. I can also slide a little side to side. The gorilla hook allows quick connection and disconnection.

Secondly, I have a six-foot shock-absorbing lanyard attached to the back D ring. On the other end, I've attached another gorilla hook. As I climb I religiously hook and re-hook the lanyard. Once at the working spot, I hook the lanyard somewhere above my head. I'll admit, I'll go between the lanyards and the positioning chain's gorilla hooks as I move around the tower, but one of the two is always attached.

Carbiners are designed for attachment and not for repeated connection & disconnection. I'll use a carbiner to secure the rotator to the tower prior to installation after it has been hoisted to the top, but never to connect me. Two hands are required, by design, to twist the safety lock and move the lever.

An important note to make is that all of you should have a shock-absorbing lanyard. The reason, to simply sum it up, is that when your body falls and then is abruptly stopped by a line, the forces that are exerted on the body are on the order of about 5000lbs for a typical 300 lb body. That's enough force to really mess you up. The shock-absorbing lanyards are designed to cushion the fall shock to on the order of around 500lbs. The full body harness is designed to transmit the fall shock to the strongest part of the body, the hips. The lack of a belt is on purpose. The belly is a soft spot.

With steel shank shoes and good gloves (I like brown cotton jersey gloves that have rubber dots on them), and a good harness, I am very comfortable up the tower.

(Once again, please be careful before attempting any kind of work on your tower. And, if you doubt your own abilities, contact someone who knows what they're doing, or better yet a pro!...ed)

First I use what is called a Rebar Chain Positioning assembly, which consists of two locking snap hooks on each end of a thirteen-link chain. These attach to the hip D rings. Floating on the chain is a

President's message

Mike VA3WXS – President

The meetings for the start of the club year were very interesting and well attended. The three speakers so far this club year spoke on Digital photography, The Joys of Ham Radio and Model Aircraft respectively. The executive would appreciate feedback on suitable and interesting topics for future club meetings. We are off to an excellent start for 2003!

The Christmas Party this year is being held at the Royal Hamilton Yacht Club on Dec. 12th. More information about this event can be found elsewhere in this bulletin. We are expecting a very good turnout. Unfortunately, I will be unable to attend the party because of unavoidable personal matters. The next club meeting will be on January 15, 2003 and again will be absent, as I will be out of the country.

Please allow me to take this opportunity to wish all our club members and their families a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Being DX

David VE3STT – Editor

Ever wonder what it's like to be DX? The closest I've been was during the 2001 Canada Day contest when I was visiting my hometown of Winnipeg and had the chance to operate with Ed VE4YU as VE4RAC in the RAC Canada Day Contest, which as I mentioned earlier in my Contesting article, meant we were a 20pt contact and somewhat rare. But, by no means is that being serious DX.

Recently, while reading an Amateur radio magazine, I spotted an article about other Amateurs who facilitate operation and accommodation at some quite exotic DX locations. And, of course these days, they happen to have a website.

This is in no way an endorsement or advertisement for his services, but if you've ever wondered what it would be

like to sift through several hundred SSB or CW contacts all at once, visit,

<http://www.dxholiday.com>

George Carlin's view on aging

Rick VE3BK

(As we close the year, and each of us feels that sense of being "one year older," I thought it might be appropriate to include the following wisdom of comedian George Carlin, submitted by Rick. I'm sure some of it is taken from Carlin's recent book, but it's worth a chuckle or two and a nice way to wrap our calendar year! Happy New Year!...ed)

Do you realize that the only time in our lives when we like to get old is when we're kids? If you're less than 10 years old, you're so excited about aging that you think in fractions. "How old are you?"

"I'm four and a half!" You're never thirty-six and a half. You're four and a half, going on five! That's the key.

You get into your teens, now they can't hold you back. You jump to the next number, or even a few ahead.

"How old are you?"

"I'm gonna be 16!" You could be 13, but hey, you're gonna be 16!

And then the greatest day of your life, you become 21. Even the words sound like a ceremony...you BECOME 21! YESSSS!!!

But then you turn 30. Oooohh, what happened there? Makes you sound like bad milk. He TURNED; we had to throw him out. There's no fun now, you're just a sour-dumpling. What's wrong? What's changed?

You BECOME 21, you TURN 30, then you're PUSHING 40.

Whoa! Put on the brakes, it's all slipping away. Before you know it, you REACH 50...and your dreams are gone. But wait!!! You MAKE it to 60. You didn't think you would!

So you BECOME 21, TURN 30, PUSH 40, REACH 50 and MAKE it to 60.

You've built up so much speed that you HIT 70! After that it's a day-by-day thing; you HIT Wednesday!

You get into your 80s and every day is a complete cycle; you HIT lunch; you TURN 4:30; you REACH bedtime...and it doesn't end there.

Into the 90s, you start going backwards; "I was JUST 92."

Then a strange thing happens. If you make it over 100, you become a little kid again. "I'm 100 and a half!"

May you all make it to a healthy 100 and a half!!

HOW TO STAY YOUNG

1. Throw out nonessential numbers. This includes age, weight and height. Let the doctor worry about them.
2. Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down.
3. Keep learning. Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever. Never let the brain idle.
4. Enjoy the simple things.
5. Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath.
6. The tears happen. Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life, is ourselves. Be ALIVE while you are alive.
7. Surround yourself with what you love, whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.
8. Cherish your health: If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.
9. Don't take guilt trips. Take a trip to the mall, to the next county, to a foreign country, but NOT to where the guilt is.
10. Tell the people you love that you love them, at every opportunity.

AND ALWAYS REMEMBER

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take but by the moments that take our breath away.

Happy Holidays!