



March 2003

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The Hamilton Amateur Radio Club
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 Est. 1932 Inc. 1956

The Hamilton Amateur

The Hamilton Amateur Radio Club Newsletter - 71 Years of Amateur Radio 1932-2003

Columbia

David VE3STT – Editor

I had just finished the printing of the last newsletter and still had to get to the mailing labels for the envelopes on the weekend. I had planned to spend a few hours on Sunday doing just that, but plans changed after I woke up Sunday morning.

I can still recall living in Winnipeg and watching the horror of the Challenger disaster many years ago. That too was staggering, perhaps more so because at that time we were still watching shuttle take-offs. Now they had simply become routine and the landings were nothing more than 10 seconds on radio and even less time with video on TV.

Nothing was routine about Saturday, February 1, 2003 as NASA reported later that day:

"The Space Shuttle Columbia and its seven astronauts were lost today when the vehicle broke up over north central Texas during its re-entry from orbit.

Communications were lost with Columbia and its crew at around 8am CST, while the shuttle was traveling about 18 times the speed of sound at an altitude of 207,000 feet. Columbia was 16 minutes from landing at the Kennedy Space Center when flight controllers at Mission Control lost contact with the vehicle. Columbia was returning from a 16-day scientific research mission, its 28th flight, which launched on January 16.

Aboard Columbia were Commander Rick Husband, completing his second flight, Pilot William McCool, wrapping up his first mission, Mission Specialists

Dave Brown, also completing his first mission, Kalpana Chawla, on her second flight, Laurel Clark, a first-time space traveler, Payload Commander Mike Anderson, ending his second flight, and Payload Specialist Ilan Ramon of the Israel Space Agency, on his first flight."

Next meeting's Speaker

March 19

"Internet Security – Dave VE3HTC"

Our own Dave Rypma VE3HTC will give us an overview of internet security as well explain some facts about the security level on your home computer.

As you know, Internet Security is a big topic these days and many companies spend millions of dollars protecting their data. David travels all over the world assisting companies and organizations in setting up security programs. Then there is the old question "how secure am I when I put my credit card number on the net?"

Our speaker has an extremely high level of technical knowledge in these matters and will be able to put in terms that we can appreciate. So bring a friend and we'll see you there.

The lesser-known fact, at least to the general public, was that the Amateur radio community also lost some people that morning. Three of the Mission Specialists on STS-107 were Amateurs, Kalpana Chawla KD5ESI, David M. Brown KC5ZTC and Laurel B. Clark KC5ZSU.

Amateur radio also played its part in the

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!

aftermath by helping out on the ground during the search and recovery of the hundreds of thousands of bits and pieces, in an attempt to try to find the cause for the Columbia disaster.

Slightly less than two weeks after the crash, the following word came from ARRL in Newington:

"Ham radio support for the shuttle Columbia debris search and recovery effort in Nacogdoches and San Augustine counties in Texas wrapped up February 12. US Forest Service personnel were scheduled to assume the support role hams had filled in East Texas for nearly two weeks.

South Texas Section Emergency Coordinator Bob Ehrhardt W5ZX, praised Amateurs for their professionalism and dedication. Ehrhardt said the weather often was rainy and cold with some sleet and the brambles and briars in the forest did not help. Ehrhardt said the agencies the hams worked with were pleasantly surprised, and pleased, too. As he put it, "I know that we changed several minds that we could get the job done."

Hams spent about 12 days in the Columbia search-and-recovery effort, using GPS and off-the-shelf computer mapping software to pin down and report the locations of debris items as they were sighted.

Preliminary numbers reported this week indicated that 198 Amateurs logged in at one time or another in Nacogdoches County and 148 in San Augustine County. An estimated 80 percent of the participating Amateurs were from outside the two counties."

And, as all that was happening on Earth, another trio of Amateurs were reflecting on the loss of their friends and colleagues:

"The all-ham crew members of the International Space Station said February 11 that while they grieve the loss of the shuttle Columbia crew, human space exploration must continue and they're ready to spend up to a year in space if necessary. The ISS crew made its first public comments since the

Important points

Executive Meetings

HARC Executive committee meets each month, except July and August at Mohawk College in room E031B. All members are invited to attend and participate. The meetings are on the Tuesday following the club General Meeting each month.

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

February 1 shuttle disaster in two news conferences this week.

The crew has not used the NAISS onboard ham stations since the last Amateur Radio on the International

Space Station (ARISS) school contact in January. The next scheduled ARISS contact is set for Friday, February 21, with students at Oregon State University.

Commander Ken Bowersox KD5JBP, said that once it became unlikely that there were any survivors from the Columbia catastrophe, "we discussed all of the different options for how it would affect us

... We've got a Soyuz vehicle parked right outside."

He said the crew did not feel isolated and had plenty of contact with family and friends and that, while not operating at peak efficiency, the ISS crew members would continue to move forward with the "serious tasks" ahead of them."

The very latest word, as of February 26th, is that additional Amateur radio involvement has been requested in the search for potential shuttle debris.

Amateur operators from New Mexico, and several other U.S. states have been asked to aid in the search, as the investigation shifts further westward:

Amateur Radio continued its involvement with efforts to locate space shuttle Columbia debris, as NASA's search shifted focus last week to include points west of Texas. According to NASA, the search for parts is running along the shuttle's re-entry path, basically 60-miles north or south of a line from San Francisco, California, to Lafayette, Louisiana.

New Mexico Amateurs helped with efforts in the Albuquerque area last weekend. Members of the New Mexico Search and Rescue Support Team were involved with follow-up efforts in Embudito Canyon, in the Sandia Mountains east of Albuquerque.

Authorities asked the NM SAR Support Team to provide communication and incident base support February 15 for a massive search involving more than 150 searchers. Although several small objects were found in the rugged terrain, none were attributed to the Columbia.

NASA has asked for help in Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah in locating any material that may have fallen from Columbia as it was re-entering Earth's atmosphere. "Everyone is asked to be on the lookout for possible shuttle material 60-miles north or south of the re-entry track," NASA said.

February 1st certainly was a day that will live vividly in the minds of everyone that witnessed the final words, incredible video and later the riveting tributes to the astronauts. And, it was also a time to reflect on some of the many people, in many walks of life, who are part of our Amateur radio community.

New Field Day entry class for 2003

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

Field Day will gain another entry class for 2003. "Class F" stations will operate at emergency operations centres, or EOC's. The change renews the emphasis of Field Day's 1933 origins as an emergency preparedness exercise as opposed to a routine contest.

ARRL Contest Branch Manager Dan Henderson N1ND, said that last year the League received a record number of Field Day entries from groups and individuals. Given the increased emphasis on emergency communications since September 11, 2001, the ARRL Board's Membership Services Committee asked that the Contest Branch come up with something to reflect that emphasis. The new Class F station is the result.

"This is a major change," Henderson said. "Class F has been established to encourage groups to test and further their working relationships with established emergency operations centres." The updated rules and a list of frequently asked questions in the new 2003 Field Day packet spell out the details.

A Class F entry station must set up at an "established EOC" centre activated by a

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club or non-club group. Class F EOC operation must take place in cooperation with the EOC staff. Class F stations are eligible for the same bonus points as Class A stations.

Contesting

David VE3STT – Editor

It might sound like a broken record (and for those that might not extend that far back – like a scratched CD or corrupt sound file), but once again I am writing this "Contesting" column after another 160m contest, a cup of coffee at my side.

CQWW 160m SSB Contest 2002

The CQWW 160m SSB Contest happened the weekend of February 22nd/23rd and once again VE3DC figured prominently!

It's another test of will and sleep deprivation as all the activity happens in the hours of darkness. But with a good crew, all club members, we managed to combat some extremely tough conditions on the air and in the immediate area.

The short summary is that we had things ready to go a little over a week in advance of the contest. We gathered at the contest site and did some last minute work on the 160m antenna and spent another evening acquainting ourselves with the equipment (radio, software, computer) to be used during the contest. We felt we were ready.



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With slightly less than an hour to go before the start of the 48hr contest, Friday 7pm start time (0000z Saturday), we had everything on sight, hooked up and ready to go. About 40-minutes in, we noticed that the "on-air" light was failing to go out on the amplifier we were using. The receiver was still functioning in receive mode, so it was puzzling. A quick check revealed that the amp was tripping the relay inside the rig, but not letting go at the end of each transmission. Not a good way to start!

Even quicker was the fix. Don VE3VZ, put together an outboard relay, which was placed between rig and amp, and we were totally back in business.

Weather became a bit of a concern Saturday as darkness approach for the second time. A huge storm was rushing into Southern Ontario, with rain snow and ice in tow. Driving was a concern, so all the operators showed up earlier than usual to be at the site and off the streets when the weather arrived. Good plan too, as during the storm the top ten feet of our 160m antenna, including three wires strung from the top tip to add capacitance, tumbled to the ground with a roughly quarter-inch ice load. That was but a speed bump in our quest.

Despite noise that was registering S9 (when it should not even be present) on beverage antennas throughout North America, as we later found out, we slogged our way through 589 contacts, including 56 US states/Cdn provinces and 16 different countries to end with a final score of 207,576.

To put that in perspective, the Qso count was down slightly from last year, but the state/Province total was comparable and the 16 countries was second only to our amazing performance, placing 2nd in the World, in 1998. Because of the noise experience throughout North America, we feel confident that our score will stand up as a significant showing in this year's contest.

CQ WPX SSB 2003

The end of March marks the traditional WPX SSB contest, with the CW portion to follow in May. Here's what you'll need to know in order to participate (complete details can be found at <http://home.woh.rr.com/wpx/WPXRules2003.pdf> by the way)!

The contest is 48 hours beginning 0000z March 29th, which is actually Friday night here. Work any station on the traditional contesting bands 1.8MHz to 28MHz (no WARC bands of course).

Categories include Single Op, Single Op (Single Band and All Band) Hi, Low and QRP power levels. An assisted SO/w: Packet, Tribander/Single element

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

Ham-Ex 2003

*Peel & Mississauga Amateur Radio
Clubs*

Brampton Fall Fair Ground, Old
School Road, Brampton
SATURDAY, MAR 22nd/2003!

Admission: \$6

Talk in: 146.880 & 145.430 MHz

Durham Region Hamfest

*North Shore & South Pickering ARC
Iroquois Park Recreation Centre,
Whitby*

SATURDAY, APR 26th/2003!

Admission: \$6

Talk in: 147.375 MHz

Skywide Spring Hamfest & Flea

*Skywide Amateur Radio Club
Westway United Church, 8 Templar
Drive, Etobicoke*

SATURDAY, MAY 10th/2003!

Admission: \$5

Talk in: 146.985 MHz

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

category and several versions of Multi-Operator categories. In other words, plenty of opportunity to win!

The exchange is simple, a signal report and a consecutive three-digit number, given and received. The point structure is not quite as simple, you can read more about it yourself, but every contesting software package should support this one and simplify that for you. And, remember that you now obtain points by working any station at all in WPX! The multiplier is, of course, unique prefixes throughout the contest.

Logs electronically submitted must be in the Cabrillo format now, which is much too involved to get into here, but again the software packages should handle that for you.

This is another one of those contests that generates activity on virtually every band. It's a great way to find a few new countries, but you'll have as much fun working your neighbour. It's also a great chance to get on and give your entire shack a workout, no matter what level of experience, equipment and antenna system you happen to possess. I guarantee you will make contacts!

Get on the air and make a few Q's, you'll have a blast and everyone will appreciate your participation!

Geography 101

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

(If you chase DX, or are a contester, please note the following. While it may not impact actual call signs used and possible DXCC credit for the foreseeable future, it just may further down the log...ed)

Yugoslavia's parliament has voted to formally abolish that nation and replace it with a new country called Serbia-Montenegro, which were the two remaining Yugoslav republics. In accordance with a deal arranged by the European Union and aimed at keeping the two republics together, Serbia and Montenegro will continue to share a capital, Belgrade, and a joint administration for defence and foreign affairs. The new arrangement will have little immediate impact on Amateur Radio. For DXCC purposes, Serbia and Montenegro will be considered a single entity, at least for the time being, and Amateurs there are expected to continue using YU/YT prefixes. The situation could change in three years when residents of the two republics would be allowed to vote to stick together or go their separate ways. Yugoslavia was established in 1918 as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. DXCC criteria are available on the ARRL Web site

<http://www.arrl.org/awards/dxcc/rules.html#sii>

Amateur radio saves lives

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

(The credit for this article goes to Dick W6OLD, from the Carson Valley Radio Club in Nevada...ed)

As ARRL member Joe Giraudo N7JEH, was on his long, daily commute to his office at a mining corporation outside Elko, Nevada, he came upon a car that had skidded on "black ice" and rolled over a number of times in isolated valley north of Carlin. A bus carrying emergency medical technicians to the mine had already arrived, and the EMT's were mobilizing to treat the three accident victims. Giraudo immediately called up the auto patch on the W7LKO 146.85 repeater to notify the Nevada Highway Patrol and the Carlin police and fire departments. He again used the auto patch so EMT's could relay situation reports to the responding emergency units. When the emergency units started arriving, they found they were unable to communicate using their own radios because of the local terrain. Again, the auto patch under Giraudo's control allowed them to communicate with their central dispatcher to coordinate other responding units, warn them of the black ice and request helicopter support. At one point the W7LKO auto patch went down, but Gene D'Asto WA7BWF, immediately came up on the repeater and began relaying information via landline. After a 30-minute extraction effort, all three victims were taken by ambulance to the Elko Regional Medical Centre.

Special Club Meeting!

Fred VE3GCP – Secretary

Thanks to the success of the VE3DC Contest Group, and our usual excellent

HARC 2002-2003 Chairs

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Field Day efforts, the executive has

been made aware of a little housekeeping situation that needs our attention.

It seems that a very large influx of QSL requests from all over the world have been received through the RAC QSL Bureau. Of course we wish to respond to these QSL's, so it has been decided to have a special Social Meeting at which we can make light work of this task.

Of course this is also a good excuse for an additional social evening where we could enjoy copious quantities of "donuts & coffee," after all we are VE3DC. In any case this will be a chance to get together in a casual manner and there will be special treats and goodies.

We will all work together to process these cards and catch up on club chatter. If you have any question about this meeting, we will be happy to answer that at the March General Meeting, which is on Wednesday the 19th.

This special meeting will be at the usual club meeting room, one week later on Wednesday March 26 and we will start at 7pm. We need your help and this will be a great chance to meet some of the club members on an eyeball basis.

"Amateur Radio Today" video

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

(I particularly like the part about "club presentation" near the end of this next article, if anyone has a projector capable of displaying the file. The running time is only six minutes, but the file is humungous! Be prepared, if you attempt to download...ed)

An updated "Amateur Radio Today" video now is available for free downloading from the ARRL Web site <http://www.arrl.org/ARToday>. The MPEG-format file is 70 Mbytes.

Narrated by former CBS News anchorman Walter Cronkite KB2GSD, Amateur Radio Today showcases the public service contributions made by

hams throughout the country. Highlights include ham radio's response on September 11, 2001, ham radio's part in helping various agencies respond to last year's wildfires in the Western US, and ham radio-in-space educational initiatives. Directed by Dave Bell W6AQ, Amateur Radio Today was written by Alan Kaul W6RCL. The production team included Bell and Kaul as well as Bill Pasternak WA6ITF, and Bill Baker W1BKR. The editor was Keith Glispie WA6TFD.

Amateur Radio Today is an ideal presentation for clubs, government meetings, civic organizations and any other venue where you want to vividly illustrate what Amateur Radio has to offer the public. The video runs just six minutes and is available in several formats. The digital version of Amateur Radio Today is available in MPEG video format, which can be played by Windows Media Player, Apple QuickTime or RealPlayer software. It can be run from the CD or copied to your hard drive (not included).

This copyrighted program is not intended for broadcast use (including over-the-air, cable or Internet) and may not be reproduced or distributed without permission. You also can order Amateur Radio Today on CD-ROM and VHS tape. The CD-ROM version also requires that you have software that can play MPEG files installed on your computer.

February minutes

Fred VE3GCP - Secretary

We opened the meeting at 8:05pm with 38 members present and Stan VE3GFE in the president's chair again since Mike Krebs is still away.

Stan gave a brief welcome and then asked if there were any new members or visitors on hand. Ian Bailey was introduced as a new member; his call is VA3FIB.

Secretary, Fred was then asked to introduce our guest speaker for the evening. He introduced Bill Spring VE3ALM, who spoke on his

experiences in the construction of and flying very small aircraft. Bill had some videotape showing his early flights, which included a 2-place and 1-place metal planes. He also talked about how he got introduced to all of this through his purchase of an "ultralite". This homemade craft had been built and crashed on its first flight by the builder who promptly moved onto a different hobby. Each year he travels to trading shows where the Amateur plane builders and flyers meet to buy/trade and show their wares, much like we have flea markets for Amateur radio. He explained this hobby is also like ours in that it is something that you can be involved in for life and that can be very time-consuming and costly.

We took our coffee break at about 9:30 and as a special treat we enjoyed some extra goodies and cake, which were made for us by Helen Love, the xyl of Frank VE3FWL. Helen, on behalf of the members, may I extend our thanks to you.

After the break, the first order of business was that Lorraine VA3NZ our awards chairperson presented the CW Operating Award to Bob Edge VA3RE. Bob was announced as the winner last month but the trophy had not been engraved at that time. Bob gets to be the custodian of the trophy until next year and he received his framed certificate, which he will keep. Lorraine also took the opportunity to suggest a club field trip to the Acton Monitoring Station. After some discussion it was agreed that Lorraine might do the preliminary inquiries and then come to the exec with a more detailed proposal.

Mardy VE3QEE rose to announce that three candidates passed their exams since our last meeting, Al Urfey, Heather Dalgleish and Jack Gothier. We extend our congratulations to them.

With regard to the station at the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum, Frank VE3FWL advised that work is underway to create a special QSL card for VA3CWM, which will include a free pass into the museum. This of course will be a win-win situation for the museum and our club. Dave

VE3DLK advised the members that the next evening (Thursday Feb.20) would be a special Avro Arrow presentation at the museum.

David Bruton VE3DWJ announced that an agreement has been struck with Salvation Army again for our club to do the communications for their annual Red Shield Appeal. Of all the annual activities that our club has ever done this is the most long standing. If my memory serves me correctly, our involvement with this community services is now over 25 years.

Emsley VE3JAI and David VE3DWJ are working together on the coordination of Field Day this year and Emsley suggested that persons wishing to be band captains should speak up soon.

Meeting adjourned at 9:59pm.

4L4FN leaving North Korea

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

Ed Giorgadze 4L4FN, the first Amateur to operate extensively from North Korea and to earn DXCC from that entity, will leave for his next duty assignment March 1. Last fall, after about one year of operation, Giorgadze, an employee of the United Nations World Food Program who had been operating as P5/4L4FN from Pyongyang, was ordered off the air by North Korean authorities. The ARRL accredited SSB and RTTY operation of P5/4L4FN for DXCC, and Giorgadze himself earned a mixed DXCC Award during his stay.

As of the end of his operation last November 22, P5/4L4FN had logged a total of 16,194 QSO's (12,170 unique call signs) that included 167 DXCC entities worked.

More information on P5/4L4FN is available on the AMSAT Net Web site <http://www.amsatnet.com> of QSL manager Bruce Paige KK5DO. Click on "P5 North Korea."