



April 2003

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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 - 71 Years of Amateur Radio 1932-2003

The QSL challenge

David VE3STT - Editor

Winning is just half of it! Just ask the members of the VE3DC Contest Group and, thankfully, a supporting cast made up of willing members of the Hamilton Amateur Radio Club.

When VE3DC is heard "loud and proud" in major contests everyone wants to work the club call. But, along with the responsibility of making sure the club looks good on the international scene and the history and past success of the VE3DC group is upheld, comes the challenge of "the QSL!"

It has been called the final courtesy of a contact with another Amateur. And when VE3DC puts up impressive numbers in each contest it enters, the cards come fast and furious after the contest is over. That's where the recent "VE3DC special QSL meeting night" came in quite handy!

Again, thanks to the many volunteers, as a group we were able to polish off several thousand QSL requests. The cards most often come via the "VE3 Incoming QSL Bureau," which handles the cards for us until there is sufficient number to warrant a delivery. Once the actual cards are double-checked with contest and Field Day logs, they are bundled and then sent through the "RAC Outgoing QSL Bureau."

If nothing else, a RAC membership will buy access to this wonderful way of exchanging cards all over the World. If you happen to be an active contester or are seeking DX awards, this is very helpful. In fact, just in case it's been a while since you've cracked a RAC

TCA, I've summarized the activity of the RAC QSL Bureau elsewhere in this addition of the newsletter. By all means take advantage of the service, provided by RAC volunteers.

Next meeting's Speaker

April 16

"Hammond Museum of Radio - Noreen VE3AQZ"

We've done it again! Another great guest speaker is joining us April 16 at our usual monthly club meeting. Our guest will be Noreen VE3AQZ. Noreen is the curator for the Hammond Museum of Radio.

Those of you who have been around a while will be familiar with the name Fred Hammond and the fact his museum in Guelph is world-renowned. Over the years some of us have had the pleasure of visiting this amazing place and now Noreen will bring us a professional quality presentation of some of the equipment that has been the basis of Amateur history. I am sure that a broad spectrum of people will be interested and we invite you to invite others!

We gathered at the usual club meeting place on Wednesday, March 26th and sat down to a load of cards. The cards, by the way, were simply designed using Microsoft Word and the design then commercially printed on coloured cardstock. It's actually quite an economical way of doing things for a large volume printing. The rough cost worked out to about 45-dollars for some two thousand cards. Combined with a stack we had left over from a previous

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!

QSL session, it proved to be just enough to get "caught up" with this latest batch.

Fred VE3GCP was kind enough to summarize some of the activity the night of the event.

There were 19 people in attendance for the purpose of knocking off our backlog of QSL card requests. These, some 1,200 cards came to us from all over the world and many were very interesting. For some of those present it was a bit of a learning experience. Certainly it can be said that these people made a great effort and did a good job of helping get our QSL cards all over the world, although yours truly was accused of being a bit of a slave driver. I can assure you that, that accusation hurt me deeply and left a mark I will bear for the rest of my life... ..or maybe not. In any case we consumed copious quantities of coffee and the guys did go through a couple of dozen donuts (some more than others... an you know who you are). There was a consensus that we could do this again before too long and that may this time it would be pizza and pop.

All joking aside, I would like to thank the following members for a great effort:

Mardy VE3QEE, Roger VE3UFZ, Mike VE3WES, Emsley VE3JAI, David VE3STT, Don VE3EIR, David VE3DWJ, Jack VE3JGJ, Don VE3VZ, Ted VE3SS, Don VE3DDQ, Dave VE3DLK, Victor VE3VMO, Bob VE3RE, Brian BMB, Casey VE3CVP, Bob VE3MFM and last but not least Rick VE3BK. Thanks a lot fellas!

The RAC QSL bureau

David VE3STT – Editor

As I mentioned on the front page, I thought it might be useful to outline the service of the RAC Outgoing QSL Bureau. This certainly is a clear benefit of RAC membership if you contest or DX and enjoy exchanging QSL cards or seeking awards (like DXCC, WAS or WAZ, etc).

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

I've taken the liberty of simply transcribing the available information from the RAC site for you here, starting with the address to which you would mail your stack of cards, after completing the required work in sorting

and labelling. Read carefully, then get to it!

PO Box 11156, Station H

Nepean, ON K2H 7T9

Telephone: (613) 763-4526

Email: ve3exy@rac.ca

Website:

www.magma.ca/~ve3exy/bureau.html

The RAC Outgoing QSL Bureau provides an outgoing QSL card forwarding service to overseas, Canadian, and USA Incoming QSL Bureaus.

The service is available to RAC members, RAC affiliated clubs (club call only) (*HARC, by the way, is an affiliated club...ed*), and QSL Managers if they are RAC members, no matter how many QSL clients they serve.

A copy of a recent TCA label, or the RAC membership information found on the top line of the label, should accompany each shipment of QSL cards you send. QSL Managers sending cards for their QSL clients should provide proof of RAC membership for themselves.

Acknowledgment of receipt of your QSL cards will only be given if you include a Self-Addressed Stamped Envelope (SASE) with your QSL cards or provide an email address.

For faster Bureau sorting, cards should have the destination call sign clearly marked on the upper right corner (front or back). If the card is going to a QSL Manager, show the QSL Manager's call sign on upper right corner (front or back).

Finding an appropriate QSL Manager for DX station is essential. Please refer to the Bureau web page for links to QSL Managers. RAC does not take responsibility for the validity of information on these links.

Sort your QSL cards alphabetically by Bureaus' prefixes.

Separate Canadian cards and sort them by domestic Bureaus.

Also separate cards for US continental Bureaus, from Bureaus in US

possessions (KH6, KL7, KH2), and outlying areas (KP2, KP4).

Continental US cards should also be sorted by the 11 Bureaus (4th area has two Bureaus: Single-letter prefix W4, K4, N4, and two-letter prefixes AB4, WB4, etc).

QSL cards for Managers should be sorted in the Manager's Bureau, not in the client's.

Standard QSL card size is 90 X 140 mm (3.5" X 5.5"), printed on 130 grams/sq. metre stock which will result in 2400 cards weighing 4 kg, the yearly "free allowance" for RAC members (note: ARRL charges \$8/lb with no free allowance). All cards larger than 100 X 150 mm (4" X 6") will be folded by the Bureau system. Please refrain from using oversize, undersize, overweight or underweight cards.

The following countries have no Incoming QSL Bureau, so cards cannot be forwarded to these prefixes:

A3, A5, A6, J5, KH1, KH5, KH7K, KH8, KH9, KP1, KP5, P5, S7, SU, T2, T3, T5, T8, TJ, TL, TN, TT, TY, V6, VP2E, XU, XW, XZ, YA, 1Z, 3C, 3C0, 3W, 3X, 4W, 5T, 5U, 7O, 7P, 7Q, 8Q, 9N, 9U, 9X

Cards for Prefixes with no Bureau can be forwarded to a QSL Manager who is located in a country with an Incoming QSL Bureau. Cards confirming contacts with Non-Bureau prefixes will be returned to you via the Provincial Incoming Bureau.

Pursuit of the elusive two-letter VE3 call sign, Part II

David VE3STT – Editor

Picking up where I left off in February, I am again in search of the elusive two-letter VE3 call sign. Here's the story.

Having been very frustrated in my last attempt seeking the elusive two-letter VE3 call in December of 2002, when VE3ST slipped from my grasp, I set out on a new quest. If you recall from my

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previous article in February's The Hamilton Amateur, after a couple of phone calls with a member of Industry Canada's Amateur Radio Service Centre at that time, I was informed that the procedure for awarding call signs was that they must now officially re-enter the Industry Canada database, then at that point applications will be accepted on a "first come, first served" basis as of that date. In other words, when the IC database is officially updated at 12midnight, send in your application. I know that, because I clarified that twice on the phone! Please note however that the update is not reflected in the RAC website database list until sometime after that

when a transfer takes place between IC and RAC, just in case you're hunting your own two-letter quarry.

March 11, 2003 was the targeted eligibility date for new call sign I was seeking. Having checked the database regularly in case a family member had claimed the call (which they are allowed to do provided they meet eligibility within the IC regulations), I was ready



Nutech Electronics

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to play by the "new" IC rules. I filled out an application ahead of time and had it poised for fax delivery at 12midnight (thank goodness my wife needs a fax machine at home). One thing worth noting, again if you're hunting your own call, is that there is a time lag between the official IC update (12midnight each working day) and the transfer of that file to the RAC website where it can then be searched. Call signs that were previously those of an SK can be somewhat predicted, calls that have been turned in for any other reason sporadically appear (one such case happening in February of this year) and then it really is a first come, first served as soon as it's spotted! I punched in the IC fax number as the digital clock rolled over and then hit the "send" button. Immediately after that, I sent an e-mail to confirm the fax transmission and remind the IC people to watch for it when their office opened

in the morning. Two forms of notification, just in case!

The next morning, or technically later that same morning, I was up early and there it was, my targeted call had re-entered the IC database on the RAC website as expected. I felt good! So good, that I simply left things alone and hoped IC would do their thing and I would finally have my two-letter VE3 call.

Because it took the better part of three agonizing weeks to finally assign the last two-letter call I was after, I was a bit shocked when I checked the IC database the next morning, March 12th. My call had disappeared! Obviously it had already been re-assigned after only one day this time. I was optimistic as I then immediately searched that specific call on the RAC website. Much to my horror that search did NOT return my name, but that of another Amateur. Beaten once again! I was devastated. How could it be? I was literally faxing at 12midnight the day the call was to be re-assigned! The only possible answer was that this time several of us had the same thing in mind and instead of being beaten by hours it was by seconds? I sent another brief e-mail off to IC during the day expressing my disappointment and simply hoping for the courtesy an explanation.

Here's where things again "get good..."

Sometime after lunch on March 12th I did receive a call from IC explaining that my targeted call had indeed been assigned to another Amateur based on an application that was submitted February 25th, some two weeks earlier. The explanation was simply their application for that same call sign arrived earlier than mine, mine was placed underneath that one because we were both seeking the same call and therefore it was assigned to them. It was as simple as that. Sorry.

My frustration meter pinned immediately. You could say that internally "I blew smoke!" I was upset.

Calmly I explained (and oddly enough I was talking with the same person as in December) that I had done exactly the same thing she had just described in

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

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)!**

search of VE3ST, but at that time was told the procedure was to assign the call based on applications submitted only when the call returned to the database - and not before. Then I simply was too slow "day of" and missed it. If the procedure was indeed as she has just described, then I should already have VE3ST. I had now followed the "new" letter of the law in applying for this new two-letter call sign and still came up short based, this time, on rules that originally denied me VE3ST. I was puzzled, by my logic was airtight; she could not offer an explanation. I asked to speak to her boss.

I recited my dilemma once again. And with my application, stamped by her own fax machine "12midnight - March 11th" in hand, she too had a tough time explaining why the call had been reassigned in the manner it had. A mistake just might have been made. She would look into it and get back to

me by the end of the business day. That didn't happen.

I did not yet allow myself the luxury of beginning to feel good again before hearing the explanation I hoped would come the next morning, March 13th.

The phone call came mid-morning. I was actually away from my desk at the time, but was thrilled to receive the message left by my IC representative (thank goodness I remained civil to her the previous day). The "other" application apparently developed a "problem" and I was indeed able to secure the new call I was targeting after all. I am now, while retaining my original call sign, also proudly VE3OJ.

Coincidentally, as I was updating our HARC website the next day, I realized that same call sign previously belonged to one of the founding members of the Hamilton Amateur Radio Club, Charles Poole, who became a silent key March 11, 2002 at the age of 91. I can assure you VE3OJ will continue its association with HARC through yours truly. And, living to the same age would be but a bonus!

If you're on your own hunt for the elusive VE3 two-letter call, Good Luck!

Internet security

Rick VE3BK

(I asked Rick VE3BK to briefly summarize the presentation given at the last meeting by Dave VE3HTC. Rick also added some of the URL's which were referenced in Dave's Powerpoint presentation...ed)

Dave's presentation was well done. He asked how many people had networks at home, and we found out that none of us were totally secured against invasion into our private files on our computers.

These URLs will help us find the software etc. we need to be more secure on our exploration of the Internet.

Dave explained things well and I am sure we could have listened to him longer if time permitted. Very informative presentation Dave! Thank you for making Home Computer

Security so interesting. It sure shows us that many things can be done to secure your home computer from the outside world.

These are the URLs that Dave showed us at the HARC Home Security Presentation to find out more:

www.zonelabs.com - ZoneAlarm
www.javasoft.de - Ad-ware
www.cert.org - CERT/CC for alerts
www.cert.org/tech_tips/home_networks.html - A great home security resource
www.acrypt.com - aCrypt self-decrypting executable
www.gnupg.org - GnuPG encryption (open source)
www.pgpi.org - non-commercial PGP (multi-OS)
www.pgp.com - commercial PGP (8.0 latest)

Contesting

David VE3STT – Editor

Many believe the “serious” contest season only runs from October through to roughly March of each year, but each year some quality events outside of that window provide some excellent opportunities to get on the air and polish your contesting skills! One such event is the annual Ontario QSO Party.

This year the ODXA sanctioned event is entering its 7th year and will be held Saturday, April 19th 1800utc through Sunday, April 20 1800utc. Outside of the fact that VE3DC has dominated the M/M category since year one, here’s what you’ll need to know, should you decide to participate:

Ontario QSO Party 2003

OQP is open to all Amateur radio operators, regardless of license class, and shortwave listeners worldwide.

Objective: Ontario Amateurs contact as many stations as possible on as many bands as possible worldwide. Outside Ontario Amateurs contact as many Ontario stations as possible.

HARC 2002-2003 Chairs

Awards/Volunteer Examiner

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Repeater

John Vandenberg VE3DVV
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Jvandenberg@mountaincable.net

Swap Net Control

Frank Love VA3FWL
905-679-4524

Frequencies: (Phone/CW) HF 160m-10m, with the exception of the WARC bands, and all VHF/UHF Bands. Suggested Frequencies for Mobiles & QRP: 1.870, 3.735, 3.860, 7.070, 7.260, 14.130, 14.265, 21.260, 28.360 on HF SSB - And 1.830, 3.530, 3.720, 7.030, 7.130, 14.030, 21.030, 21.130, 28.030 on HF CW.

Above HF try 52.540, 146.550, 446.100 on VHF/UHF FM and 50.130, 144.205, 432.105 on VHF/UHF SSB (or other appropriate VHF/UHF frequencies).

Suggested Operation: Work HF SSB on the hour, HF CW on the half hour and VHF/UHF (either SSB/CW or FM Simplex) at 15 minutes past the hour.

Use of FM: Operators cannot use repeaters for either contest contacts or for soliciting contacts. Please keep the FM Simplex calling frequency of 146.520 MHz clear.

Categories: Multi-op, Single Op Lo Pwr (under 150w HF and under 50w VHF/UHF), Single Op Hi Pwr (150w+ HF and 50w+ VHF/UHF), Single Op Single Band, Single Op HF QRP (under 5w), VHF/UHF FM QRP (under 5w), CW-only, SSB-only or Mixed Mode, SWL, Mobile/Rover.

Exchange: Ontario sends RS(T) and county, district, regional municipality or city. Non-Ontario stations RS(T) and Province/Territory, US state, or DXCC country.

Scoring: Ontario stations work everyone. Non-Ontario stations work Ontario stations only. Mobile/Rover stations may be worked again when they change multiplier areas. SWL's only log Ontario stations.

Score 1 QSO point for each station worked on SSB per HF band. Score 2 QSO points for each station worked on CW per HF band. (You may work a station TWICE per HF band, once on SSB and once on CW).

On the VHF/UHF bands you may only work a station ONCE per VHF/UHF band regardless of mode. Score 5 QSO points for each station worked per band.

Score 10 QSO points for each contact made with ODXA club station

VE3ODX and RAC Ontario club station VA3RAC. (You may work VE3ODX and VA3RAC twice per HF band i.e. SSB & CW and once on each of the VHF/UHF bands). *(And as an added bonus this year, apparently both the VA3RAC and VE3ODX calls will be held by "rover" operations, which means they may be worked yet again on both modes when they cross into a new Ontario county, as explained in the first paragraph of the "scoring" rule. Even more of a challenge and certainly more points for your overall score...ed)*

Ontario stations claim 1 multiplier point for each Ontario county, district, regional municipality (city in the case of City of Toronto), worked on each band. Ontario stations also claim 1 multiplier point for each Canadian province/territory, U.S. state and DXCC country worked on each band.

Non-Ontario stations and SWL's claim Ontario multipliers only.

Total Score = Total QSO points x total multiplier points.

And yes, there are AWARDS!

Complete details, rules, awards, etc. can be reached at: <http://www.oxda.on.ca>

March minutes

Fred VE3GCP – Secretary

Of course we had our usual club meeting on the 3rd Wednesday and our president Mike was back to conduct this function. At 8:05 he opened the meeting with a welcome and explained that he had enjoyed his trip but was glad to be back. There was the usual introduction of guests and visitors. Fred, our secretary was promptly called upon to introduce the guest speaker.

David Rypma VE3HTC, is an Amateur of long standing and we are proud to say that much of that has been with the Hamilton ARC. Much of his working career Dave has spent in the field of large corporate type computer systems. For some years now he has specialized in the area of system security. He works for a large insurance/investment

firm where he is responsible for the development and maintenance systems that protect the security and privacy of company and client data.

Dave explained at a base level, what happens to your credit card number and other personal info that you might expose to the Internet. He spoke of things (programs) such as private and public key and how data is encoded to protect the information and assure the accuracy of data. There was also discussion on the security of your PC at home, which was a bit of an eye opener. This was a very informative talk and there was a great level of interest. Judging from the number and type of questions this meeting had the potential of keeping Dave there a long time if we could allow that. On behalf of the club I would extend our thanks to Mr. Rypma for a very interesting presentation.

We then took our usual coffee break and I must say that since Bernie Granby was away on vacation it gave us an opportunity to appreciate how hard he works each month to provide with our coffee. A couple of us filled in to do that task and we will be happy to see him when he returns.

After the break the first order of the business meeting was to announce the QSL Party that will take place next Wednesday. This is a special meeting where we will complete a back log of QSL requests that have been sent to the club as a result of Field Day and the contest group. This newsletter also contains a short report of that event.

Our education chairman, Mardy advised that he is presently well under way with 2 new candidates. Mardy did not make a formal membership report this month and Mary advised that there is nothing (new) to be announced from Health & Welfare. Emsley Mitchell VE3JAI brought us up to date on the plans for field Day. Some discussion followed and it was agreed that a top quality hospitality tent would be set up as in past years. There is still opportunity for those who may wish to get involved as a band captain or as a member of one of the bands that is already established. We will expand the number of bands to

be operated so as to accommodate everyone who wishes to get involved. We are still a few weeks away but David Bruton VE3DWJ requested that persons wishing to help with communications for the Salvation Army Red Shield project should call him ASAP.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10pm.

Homebrew night

David VE3STT – Editor

May means "homebrew!" And the annual May meeting of the HARC is the night homebrew projects take centre stage. It's always a great night to make the meeting, if only to see some of the innovative and finely crafted projects from fellow club members, possibly sparking something inside you for the next year.

The rules are quite simple, in fact the only stringent criteria is that your project was started within this last year! You'll have a chance to talk about your work and how it relates to Amateur radio, any special parts and equipment used to bring it to life and its practical use in your ham shack. And, remember that it doesn't have to be a huge, involved project to possibly sway the judges in your direction. Even the simplest dipole, creatively presented, with a hook that makes it unique in your ham shack environment, might just make you a winner. In fact, just entering a project that has been crafted by hand, showing the skills that we all have as Amateurs, makes the entire evening a "winning" evening, when we share the stories and expertise.

So, big project or small, let's have a look at your work! Bring your project, and a friend if you like, and participate in the annual "HARC Homebrew Night"!

Anagrams

David VE3STT

Did you know... An anagram of "The Morse Code" is "Here comes dots!"