



# The Hamilton Amateur

The Hamilton Amateur Radio Club Newsletter 73 Years of Amateur Radio 1932-2005

The Hamilton Amateur Radio Club  
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 Est. 1932 Inc. 1956  
<http://www.hwcn.org/link/harc/>

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## Important Reminder from the Contest Corner

by Rick Danby, VE3BK

Hi Everybody. Just a reminder to all that the Ontario QSO Party will be here in a week. Contest runs for 24 hours only, from Saturday April 15th at 2pm (18:00 utc) to Sunday April 16th, at 2pm (1800 UTC). This is the weekend **before** the April Club meeting.

I need to know who is planning to run a station. So far I anticipate having Joe doing 10 and 15m, Fred doing 20m, Dan doing 80m, Mark doing 160m and helping out when 160 is not open, myself on 40m and possibly Mike on 2m - 6m.

We are inviting additional operators, like you, even if you have never operated a contest before. If you can plan to come out phone me (Rick) at 905-544-3253, or send me an e-mail to <rdanby@sympatico.ca>. Any of you newer guys, what are your plans, can you help us out? This is only a 24 hr contest, Sunday is still open for family at Easter, as we will be all done by 2pm, this is one of the contests that we like to do and we are the record holder for Multi-multi as VE3DC. This is strictly a Canadian contest, now run by Contest Club Ontario, of which VE3DC is also a member.

The rules, suggested frequencies, multipliers etc are available at the CCO website. The web address is: for the main page: <<http://cco.ve3xd.com/oqp/index.htm>>, and for the rules: <<http://cco.ve3xd.com/oqp/oqprules.htm>>

This will be a fun contest with us being in demand as an Ontario station and the only big gun in Haldimond Norfolk county. I hope you can join us.

## Ham Radio Events

*News about future and recent events to keep you up to date.*

There are several public service events going on this Spring where radio amateurs volunteer their services. Many of these events are assisted by local HAMS who are not members of HARC but who volunteer to arrange amateur participation. Your services are welcomed by these people. You could contact them directly to volunteer, or get one of the executive to pass your name along. Here is a list of events in chronological order, just so you know about them, or in case you would like to volunteer.

**Paris to Ancaster Bike Race.** This event occurs annually in early April. Ham Radio Operators volunteer to provide communications for this major, 60 KM long, cycling event. The race takes place on Sunday April 9th, 2006 from approximately 10:00 AM to 4:00

Club meetings – 3rd Wednesday each month – 8 pm (except July and August) at Hamilton District Christian High School, 92 Glancaster Road corner of Rymal Road (Hwy. #53) and Glancaster Road. Parking on location. Complimentary refreshments.

PM This year the Paris to Ancaster Bicycle Race is billed as the "13th Annual Classic". Gary Notto, VE3TTO, is coordinating HAM participation. Gary can be reached at 905-387-1103. The radio amateur volunteers meet early for breakfast then proceed to their assigned locations along the route. This event takes place rain or shine. Contact Gary to volunteer and to get information.

Cancer Assistance Program, (CAP), "**Moving Mountains**" blade/bike/walkathon. This has been an annual event for a number of years. The date is Sunday May 7th, 2006, starting at 13:00 hrs. (Hams meet with control station at 12:15 hrs. in the Queensdale School hallway adjacent to the Registration area) and wrapping up around 16:00 hrs. The Start/Finish line is at Queensdale Elementary School (Queensdale Ave. 1 block East of Upper James St.) Our net control will be VA3LJU, Linda Hardwick. Please respond to me, Bob Brown (VE3CYE) by Wednesday April 26, 2006 to let me know if you would like to volunteer on Sunday May 7. We will need around a dozen or so stations to cover the routes that comprise the event. Bob's e-mail is: <bbrown@mountaincable.net>

City of Hamilton **Emergency Preparedness Day**. This public display of emergency response groups and equipment takes place annually. This year's display is scheduled for the morning of Saturday May 13th, from around 9:00 AM until about Noon. This is a rain or shine display. In the ARES tent we will have information about the hobby of Amateur Radio and ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Response). All of the other groups comprising the City's emergency response personnel will be assembled at Bayfront Park to demonstrate equipment and activities. There is lots to see, a time to ask questions, and a great outing for the kids. Check it out. Contact Gerry Osborn (VE3JSO) regarding ARES participation or Al (VA3AM) and Lorraine Macpherson (VA3NZ) for information about the CERV group.

## HARC 2005-2006 Executive

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**Great Ride and Stride** to Beat Cancer on the Linc. Once again, the Hamilton Wentworth Unit of the Canadian Cancer Society has requested the services of radio amateurs on Sunday, May 28th, from about 9:00 AM until about 12:30 PM to cover the route of the Great Ride and Stride. There are 12 bridges over the Linc. along the route of the blade/bike/walkathon. We would like to have a mobile VHF unit under each bridge for the duration of the event. Here's how it works: after checking in with net control at the Limeridge Mall parking lot, operators proceed to their assigned location with a car and park under a bridge so they can see the route both ways. Cars remain in position until released by police after officers clear the Linc. of people following completion of the event.

This means there is a long period of time away from comfort facilities. We are looking for twelve to fifteen mobile units. The contact person for volunteers is Mardy, VE3QEE, 905-648-0187, <meedson@cogeco.ca>.

Cancer Assistance Program, (CAP) "**Waterfalls Walk**" is a new event. The walk goes from Christie Conservation Area to Webster's and Tew's Falls, Greenville. Date of the walk is Saturday, June 3rd.

Volunteers and participants will meet at Christie Conservation Area Highway #5 just west of Brock Road, Greenville. (S.S. Highway #5 approx. 3 miles west of Clappison's Corner OR approx. 2 miles East of Peter's Corner). Registration happens at the McCoy Pavilion. Time of Registration is 09:00 hrs. The event will be over by approximately 14:00 Hrs. Please respond to Bob Brown VE3CYE, by Friday May 26, 2006 to let me know if you can help out.. Bob's e-mail is: <bbrown@mountaincable.net>.

## Dis & Dat

by Bernie Granby, VE3EKY, VA3XJ

So I see by the calendar it's the first day of spring and you know what ? I love it. It hasn't been a bad winter for me. I week in the Caribbean, and a month in Florida. The only bad thing is I did not get a real chance to use my new snowblower. Anyway I thought I would track the progress of the sun as it crosses the equator and proceeds into the northern hemisphere as it has since the big bang or thereabouts. When I went in to the NASA site a note informed me that the site was down. This site actually tracks the ISS (Int. Space Stn.). Gee I hope they haven't lost track of those guys. Nah! Never happen.

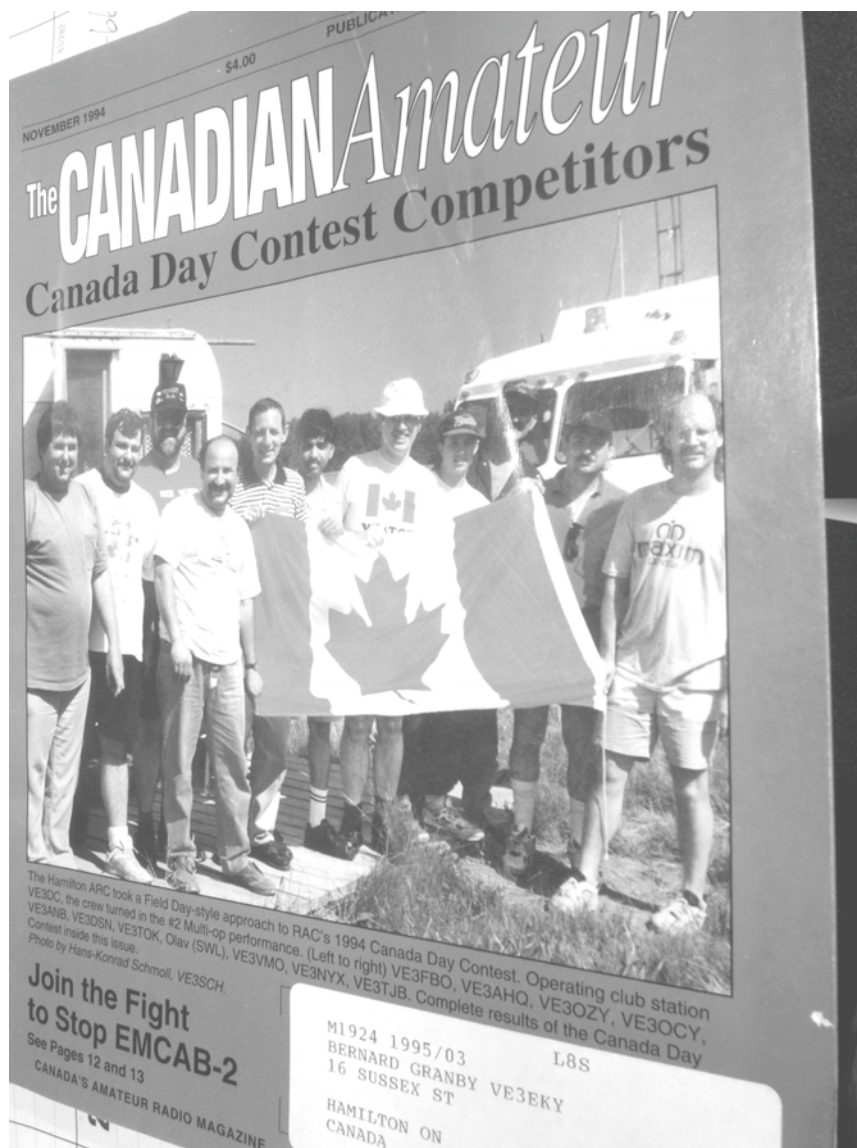
We had another good meeting in March. One note however I hope everyone doesn't run out and set up a low power beacon. Think about it. In the early days of packet it was considered bad Karma to put too

many beacons on. By the time I got my packet station I was very disappointed to see all these CQs which were only beacons. None of them wanted to have a qso. There were and still are I guess a lot of neat things on packet. I very soon lost interest. That was SWLing. That's OK if that's your thing. I got my licence so I could talk to the world. No packet cluster for me I still get a bang out of hearing someone calling me in answer to my CQ.

Well its time to start thinking about Field Day and I see we are having a meeting at 7:00 pm before the regular meeting of the club. I am going to try to do 40 CW again this year.

Thrill thrill I still get a thrill. Another piece of wall paper for the wall. Thank you Casey the certificate and frame are well done. As I looked at the names of the previous winners I was proud and humbled as I realized that my name is in there with a group of world class ops, I also realized that some of them worked 40 CW the year we set our record score at least for HARC as I remember. I think our QSO total was in the 600s. There was Norm VE3BK, Norm VE3VFR, Ted VE3SS, and of course me. I think it was at our present site and I think we used Joe and Mary's trailer and of course VE3DSN Sheran Devotta who supplied the computer. Sheran was and still is world class' I wish we had some of those guys with us now on 40 M. Cw last year hit 345, and more than half of those qsos were made by Steve VE3OZZ. I hope you can make it again this year Steve. If any one else would like to sit in at 40 CW don't be shy. You can provide some qsos. When you consider we were only on the air for 12 of the 24 hrs last year because of a lack of ops you can see there is a gap there to be filled. There are lots of slow speed ops on the air on FD. They might even have more fun.

Speaking of world class you have to know how well known the VE3DC contest group ( Rick and the group ) is. They regularly make it to the winners circle in the contests. They



made the cover of TCA November 1994.

Last month at the meeting someone asked me when Heathkit closed down. Well today I pulled an old copy of TCA and there on the back page was an ad for Heathkit. It was the March 1986 copy. It looks like they had 8 outlets in Canada. The Ontario one was on Dundas street just past Dixie Rd in Mississauga. The ad showed the worlds first automatic antenna tuner, the HW-9 QRP rig, a microprocessor and a study course. There was also a solid



state Ham rig kit. Notice in the pic the HW 9 kit which I thought was a very good rig. We should try to have a Heathkit night and ask the members to bring out their Heath rigs for a show and tell night. There are lots of Heath gear around.

Recently a friend told me he had received a ticket for having plates on his car which were unreadable. Lately it seemed no one cared about this, The ticket was for more than \$100.00.

He also told me they wanted over a hundred to give him the same no. I said my plates were Ham plates and

were purchased under a special agreement. He said oh yeah, you wait till you try. Well I did try at first I told them I wanted to just put on a set of plates I had in the cellar. The young lady said I will have to bring in my old plates I said no they are mine and I can keep them. Then she said you can't use those plates because they are outdated. I said of course they are I took them off a car I scrapped. Then I said OK just give me new plates for twenty dollars. She said OK but you will have to take the sticker off the old ones. I said you can't do that. She said you can use a loonie to do it. "What are you talking about?" It turns out she was referring to taking the plates off so I said OK go ahead after sending me away to fill the forms out and coming back I gave them to her and she started to add up the bill. She put a charge of \$74.00 on the bill. I objected and she told me I had to pay the registration fee. At that I told her that's it, you can't hear anything I say to you the fee is already paid until next Jan. 07. I blew it right there and told her no way give me my paperwork back. I had to repeat that several times, She gave them to me and gave me a polite don't go away mad. Before leaving I saw a sign that said replacement Ham plates cost \$50.00. I went home then to lick my wounds, Next morning I went to a smaller office and tried again I asked the woman if she could help me. I told her my problem and she called up the computer. Much reading followed and she called her boss to help. After a bit they said they could do it. I said how much they replied \$30.70. "OK lets do it." The computer wouldn't order them on-line so we made out an order on paper. I paid my money and left. As I walked back to my car I kept saying to myself "It can't be that simple." Now all this took place 4 weeks ago. I'm not sure I can take a joke so I waited for the plates to arrive before writing this in case the story was not



over yet. Well today my shiny new plates came in the mail. I do have to give back the old plates and get a new sticker. At no a charge. It makes me feel like a somebody. I could have kissed that lady she treated me like a human being and lord knows I really needed that because lately the red tape has been killing me and I was losing every battle. Cranky old guy you think? Why have I bared my soul about this? I have heard a lot of scuttlebutt on this subject which has kept me from getting new plates for a long time. Why the renewed interest by the police? It has been suggested to me that a foreign company that owns the 407 ETR has been complaining they can't read these worn out plates. I can believe this because The Department of Transport already helps the ETR collect tolls by withholding licence renewals until you pay your bills. The previous government did that; selling the highway to balance the budget. Remember the golden goose. From the covering letter I learned that under the law at all times the plates remain the property of the Government of Ontario. Fair enough.

I think in one of the first years we did FD from Rock Chapel 40 CW with moi as El Kapitan we pioneered the use of computers to log our QSOs. We were down past where 40 SSB is usually now. In the middle of a raspberry patch which is still there; one year Norm VE3VFR jumped on the roof of his winter beater car and pulled the end of our dipole up to a dizzying height in a tree. That may have been the year we put up a 30 foot fold over tower which Norm Smith and I owned jointly. It was a lot of work so later we gave it to Bill VE3ARX SK for his cottage. That year I rented a huge brand new generator in Dundas and I brought my Commodore 64 computer along with the printer. Roger VE3??? was there, everyone was amused. Well it was a total disaster. We had a

## HARC 2005-2006 Chairs

### Awards Chair

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separate op to log this stuff into the computer. First the computer was too slow it couldn't keep up. Then we noticed that we had to keep setting

the time in the 64. Then the computer kept crashing. Roger finally went out to the Genny ( new ) and found the generator wasn't putting out 60 cycle. When he changed the cycle the voltage went way out. Eventually we went off the air and took the generator back and returned it. The dealer said that's a new generator you guys haven't been adjusting it have you? We put our angel faces on and said not us. We wouldn't do that. He checked it and said you're right. He gave us another one and we went back up and went back on the air. The time was OK but it was still too slow mostly because of the printer, it still kept crashing. We discovered it was the RF knocking the 64 down. Every time we tried to enter data the op would start sending and the old 64 would go down. That computer was so slow that when we first booted it Roger kept saying its broken and I said it always takes that long. We finally pulled the plug and continued to work stns. I don't think we set any records but I think we had a respectable score. I continued to use the 64 to dupe the score and produce a printout the day after. The two Norms were a great pair of ops. Norm BK used a sideswiper key. He was a former commercial op. Norm VFR sent morse with an Iambic keyer using his left hand and logged with his right. He had the paddles set so they were backwards. I asked him why and he told me someone told him that would be a good way to operate, so that's the way he taught himself to operate. He is not left handed. Backwards paddles? He said when he wired his the first time that's the way they ended up and he left them that way. Those were the days my friends we thought they would never end, Well they did Norm VE3BK is sadly SK now. But for Norm VE3VFR they still go on as he is still a force to reckon with on the contest circuit from his QTH down east of Hamilton but maybe a part of Hamilton now. I don't know. Of course life goes on and call signs never die and today Rick carries on with call VE3BK. FB Rick.

Well I think dats enough about dis for April. Just the ravings of this OM 73 or 88 as fits de Bernie VE3EKY

## Hamilton ARES Meeting with CAER

a report by Barry Lisoweski, VE3ISX

Members of the local Hamilton ARES group, under the supervision of Gerry (VE3JSO) met with Chris Anderson (Dofasco) and his CAER group at the Dofasco Centre for a power point presentation outlining the valuable service provided by the CAER agency. Chris summarized his group's achievements and purpose.

Community Awareness and Emergency Response (CAER) is a community-based volunteer organization of industry personnel that has been established since 1980. CAER members plan, practice and co-ordinate activities to enhance safe operating practices and reduce the risk of emergency situations that could threaten the Hamilton-Wentworth Community. Member companies include Dofasco, Stelco Canada, VFT Canada, Air Liquide Canada, Union Gas just to name a few.

Because of expertise in their own industries, this group is the ideal choice to assist the Hamilton-Wentworth Community identifying risks, planning mitigation and cooperatively sharing equipment and material in time of crisis, major accidents, or disaster.

Some events worth remembering:  
Toronto, 1954, Hurricane Hazel: 81 Killed.

Hamilton, 1968, Storm: wind speeds 180-251 km/hr, 40 homeless  
Mississauga, 1979: train derailment resulting in chlorine leak, 250,000 evacuated

Central Ontario, 1985 tornado. 12 killed

Dryden, 1989 plane crash: 24 killed  
Hagersville, 1990: tire fire

London, 1991 train derailment:

## 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+]

HARC operates VE3NCF repeater, located atop the Niagara Escarpment. It's open for use by all Amateurs. Special features are a privilege of membership.

### Nets

HARC "check-in net" is held every Tuesday evening, except July and August, at 7:30pm. HARC "swap net" follows at 8pm. The ARES net is held on Thursdays at 8:00pm. All contacts are welcome.

### 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 \$5.

### 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 Mardy, VE3QEE < [ve3qee@rac.ca](mailto:ve3qee@rac.ca) >

hundreds evacuated because of resulting chemical spill  
Hamilton, 1997: Plastiment fire  
2000 Walkerton Tragedy  
September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attack  
2003 Black-Out affecting Eastern U.S. and Canada  
2005, Hamilton Tornado that damaged Lawfield Middle School and a number of east end homes.

For more information on CAER, visit their website at: [www.hamiltoncaer.com](http://www.hamiltoncaer.com)

You can see some of the specialized equipment and talk to CAER personnel at the City's Emergency Preparedness Day public display, at Bayfront Park on Saturday May 13th from about 9:00 AM until Noon. Come on down and check it out.

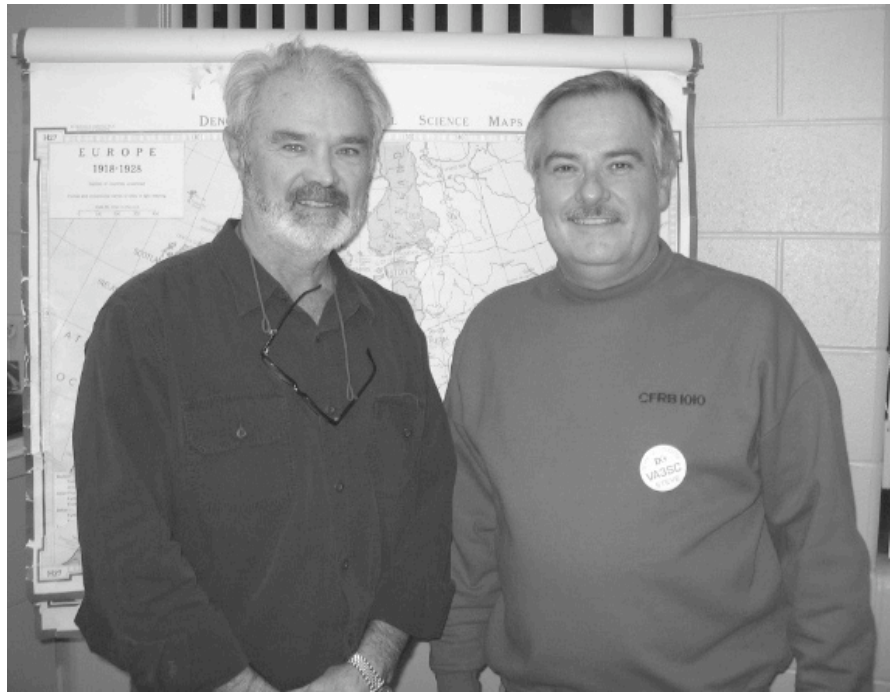
Also hosting displays at the Emergency Preparedness Day will be volunteers from our Hamilton ARES group, (Amateur Radio Emergency Service) and from the CERV group, (Citizen Emergency Response Volunteers).

## At the March 15 General Meeting...

by Fred, VE3GCP

At 8 PM our meeting was called to order by our president Roger Pimm VE3UFZ. The members were looking forward to hearing our guest speaker, Steve Canning. While the number in attendance was slightly lower this month, the enthusiasm was not. It seems that a few members of the exec (and others) were not on hand for several reasons. Some were away on well-earned vacation, some were down with the popular flu that has been around town and one fellow in particular was away because his services were "a-pparently" required to over-see the birth of a grandchild.

Promptly, John Hudac VE3CXB the fellow who wrote that great article last month on the NVIS antenna was asked to introduce our speaker. John explained that Steve Canning VE3SC had an interesting experience over many years in which he married his interest in DX and helping promote Amateur Radio. Steve has served on the executive of the Ontario DX Association.



**Roger hosting guest speaker Steve Canning VE3SC**

He also taught International Radio courses at the college level where he introduced many people to Ham Radio. His efforts in doing a Broadcast Radio show with Bob Mclean of CFRB were a great success and resulted in an ongoing weekly broadcast. The DX arm of CFRB is

CFRX and Steve was in the world of DX and SWL up to his shoulders. This station operates on 6.070 Mhz. As an adjunct to his talk, Steve graciously invited our members to visit the station as a group. The president asked for a show of hands to getting an idea of how much



**Bernie takes home the CW award for most contacts in 2005**



**Rick Danby, VE3BK presenting the CQWW Award won by the VE3DC Group**

interest there might be, and, the indication was that the exec should proceed to organize a trip. Steve also talked about setting up his own "Beacon Station". This is a way of judging band openings and conditions for the serious DXer and SWL.

They don't call us VE3Donuts and Coffee for nothing so Roger thanked our speaker and we adjourned to the parlor. If you don't already know it, Bernie Granby the author of our Dis & Dat column is also our coffee caterer....TNX again Bernie.

After D & C comes business and we started by announcing a correction to the previous minutes....The CANWARN meeting on March 25 will be at 9AM not 10 AM. PS; since you are reading this now, you already know that.

Among the missing were the Secretary/Membership and Education chairmen so those reports were tabled and that's how I got to be secretary for tonight. We did gain a new member in the person of Paul Blais VE3PNU who rose to accept his welcome.

Some good news came by way of Mary Urbanski who advised us that

the Health & Welfare Committee had nothing new to report.

Our contest group director Rick Danby took this opportunity to present the club with a plethora (according to the dictionary, that is a whole big bunch) of awards that had been earned by the contest group. Rick also announced the Ontario QSO Party Contest coming up on April 15 & 16.

Casey VanBroekhoven, VE3CVP our Contest & Awards proudly, on behalf of the members, awarded our Order of the Gavel, CW operating Award to Bernie Granby VE3EKY, VA3XJ.

A reminder announcement was made by our Field Day Coordinator David Bruton VE3DWJ that the FD Planning meeting will be at 7PM on April 19th. You will note that this is hour prior to this month's general meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10PM.

SPECIAL note to members: at a meeting, when the President calls upon a member and that member does not respond; Please don't shout out that he has gone to the bathroom. The appropriate phrase to use is: "Mr. President, that gentleman is out-standing".

## Another BPL Trial is Abandoned

*The following news item comes from The ARRL Letter, (an e-mail service for members), Vol. 25, No. 13 March 31, 2006.*

*BPL stands for Broadband Over Power Lines which is a scheme for delivering internet service by modulating the 60 cycle AC electrical power lines to households. These schemes create RF interference that affects radio reception.*

A BPL field trial in Cottonwood, Arizona, that drew complaints from Amateur Radio operators from 2004 until earlier this year apparently has shut down for good. The small system, which Mountain Telecommunications Inc (MTI) operated under an FCC Part 5 Experimental license WD2XMB, went silent in early March. The Part 5 license stipulates that the company "establish and maintain" a relationship with the Verde Valley Amateur Radio Association (VVARA), which called for the system's shutdown as recently as last December. According to VVARA BPL Committee Chair Bob Shipton, K8EQC, MTI initially took the system down for a firmware upgrade but subsequently told him that it was discontinuing the experiment in Cottonwood and moving it, possibly to the Phoenix area, where MTI is headquartered.

"There's no definitive statement from Arizona Public Service or Mountain Telecommunications that they have stopped BPL in the state of Arizona entirely," Shipton told ARRL this week. "It's just that they pulled out of the Cottonwood area."

Not only did the VVARA determine the system was generating interference on the high end of 20 meters and elsewhere, Shipton said, the club demonstrated that it could "break" the system's datastream while running as little as 65 watts from a mobile station.

"I think that was a bit of a surprise to them," allowed Shipton, who noted

that MTI remained helpful and lived up to its agreement to keep the VVARA in the loop. At the same time, he said, MTI learned everything it wanted to learn in the Cottonwood area, "and they know we're not going to let this thing go."

## Big Turnout for the Hamilton Canwarn Training Session

by Lorraine, VA3NZ - Sunday, April 2, 2006

There was a training session at the Chedoke Nash Auditorium the morning of March 25th. The training was by Environment Canada to train weather spotters. The attendance was excellent with 78 signed up. Refreshments were provided by Environment Canada, the good fortune of the auditorium, by a hospital member. The group for training consisted of a good cross section of the local area with people from all walks of life.

The spotters will relay to the weather office by way of an '800' number, packet from a control station or radio relay. The spotters are important as they can see the 'pop up' occurrences in their immediate area. The information was informative and the session was an enjoyable learning experience.

There will be a Canwarn net set up on VE3RFI, 443.250 (151.4) and VE3TVI, 146.805 (151.4) very soon. Pagers are being assigned to some people so they can start a net when the need arises.

I personally must thank everyone who showed an interest in Canwarn. Information as to the net time and day will be made available as soon as everything is finalized. It will be good to see Canwarn again in Hamilton.

### The scene at Nash Auditorium, morning of Saturday March 25th.



**Serge and Bill, Meteorologists from Environment Canada schooled these volunteer spotters in the process of storm development and the indicators of reportable events. Their presentation was illustrated with material from actual storm events and their own broad experience in weather forecasting.**

**The participants included interested community volunteers, CERV trainees, amateur radio operators, ARES members and personnel from Hamilton Health Sciences, a group representing a broader spectrum of involvement than previously tapped in the old incarnation of Canwarn.**

**Environment Canada is the only body empowered to issue weather watches and warnings, and meteorologists are the people who make the call.**



*Thanks to all those who submitted articles and pictures for this month's newsletter. Please send submissions to VE3QEE@RAC.CA before the end of March to get those items put in the April newsletter. The success of each issue relies heavily on your contributions, so folks, keep those cards and letters coming. -ed.*