



The Hamilton Amateur

The Hamilton Amateur Radio Club Newsletter – 78 Years of Amateur Radio 1932 - 2010

Hamilton Amateur Radio Club,
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Est. 1932 Inc. 1956
<http://www.hamiltonarc.ca/>

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Upcoming Events

HARC May Meeting

Wednesday May 19th is our annual HOMEBREW Night for the Crawford Trophy and a Show and Tell session for exchanging ideas.

The Crawford Trophy is awarded annually for the best home made device for use in amateur radio. The name "home brew" portrays the idea that the device was constructed in the home workshop; thereby requiring skill and patience in producing a product of quality. It also suggests that the device was made at home during leisure hours.

The purpose is to encourage Radio Amateurs to build their own equipment. The prime purpose for making a device would be for improved amateur radio communications. and/ or for testing of amateur radio equipment.

If you have an idea or a device which may not qualify as a contest entry but which would be of interest to fellow radio amateurs please bring it along for sharing in the Show-And-Tell section of the meeting.

HARC June Meeting

Wednesday June 16th is our ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and ELECTIONS. Also there will be an information and planning session for the Field Day at Bruce Park.

HARC Minutes, 21 April, 2010

Recorded by Secretary Bob Zimmerman, VE3RKZ

The general meeting was called to order by John Hudak at 7:33 pm.

(7:35) Visitors Cory Drysdale and Anita's father were introduced.

(7:40) Our speaker, Nancy Lefneski, VA3TOB, was introduced by John. In 2006, Nancy studied under Mardy Eedson to obtain her amateur radio Basic license, especially to be prepared for her planned circumnavigation of the world. Nancy and her husband took 3 and a half years for the journey. Often they were out-of-range for VHF marine radio, and found the shortwave SSB radio to be invaluable. In addition to voice communication, they also used "Air-Mail" (HF e-mail) to keep their family and friends updated on their journey. The HF weather-FAX helped Nancy avoid severe weather on the trip.

Nancy presented beautiful footage of half a day spent among playing whales in the ocean. We were scared when we watched video and listened as Nancy described severe weather on her longest passage (23 days) from Galapagos to French Polynesia. There were harrowing tales of pirates in high-powered speedboats off the east coast of Africa. And there were sailor stories about when they broke the goosneck on the boom and had to

Club meetings – 3rd Wednesday each month – 7:30 pm (except July and August) at Hamilton District Christian High School, 92 Glancaster Road, Ancaster, L9G 3K9, corner of Rymal Road (Hwy. #53) and Glancaster Road. Parking on location. Complimentary refreshments.

limp to a small island for repair, an island with only 70 residents.

Nancy's talk came to an end at 8:33pm, followed by good questions from Roger Pimm, an avid sailor himself. Members were really excited about the trip, and the role HF SSB radio played in the adventure. Mardy gave Nancy a warm thank you, and members responded with much applause.

(8:35) Refreshments and socializing.

(8:49) The Business Meeting was brought to order by John Hudak. Fred VE3GCP and Brian VA3ZME moved that the minutes of last month be accepted.

(8:51) Michael Christmas VE3XMS reported that the ALS Society needs hams for their annual event planned for June the 5th at BayFront Park. If interested, contact Gary Notto VE3TTO.

(8:55) Mary VE3OGQ gave a favourable Health and Welfare report.

Anita, our Webmaster had nothing new to report.

Dan spoke of the upcoming Field Day effort, which will be held this year at Bruce Park on the mountain bounded by Brucedale and Queensdale Avenues and lying East of James and West of Wellington. There will be a Field Day organizational meeting during the June General meeting and a Band Captain's meeting open to all participants at the Martinak farm, 897 Mud Street East on the North side. [See an announcement with details later in this issue of the newsletter. Ed.]

John VE3DVV reported that the 440 MHz repeater is still not working.

Sherry, VE3DCU the membership chair, reported there are 62 primary members and 8 family members. There are 2 more meetings this year, and renewals & new memberships are anticipated.

Rick, the Contest Chair, spoke about the Ontario QSO Party. There were 676 QSO's this year. There was some real excitement when Dan worked New Zealand on 80 meters. The participants were Fred, Dan, Adam, John, Sherry, Jim, and Jacque.

Note that Canada Day comes right after Field Day.

Fred gave an Acting Treasurer's report, and reported our bank balance stands at \$3600.

John Hudak brought the evening to a close, mentioning that next month will be Homebrew Night.

"From Spark To Space - The Story of Amateur Radio In Canada"

Submitted by John Hudak VE3CXB

On one of the ham radio newsgroups I'm subscribed to I came across mention of a book about the history of amateur radio in Canada. I've never heard of this book. It was put out by the Saskatoon Amateur Radio Club back in 1968. They have it available free for downloading on their web site.

As it only goes to 1968 obviously there is a limit as to the information

HARC 2009-2010 Executive

President

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Mike Christmas, VE3XMS
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Secretary

Bob Zimmerman, VE3RKZ
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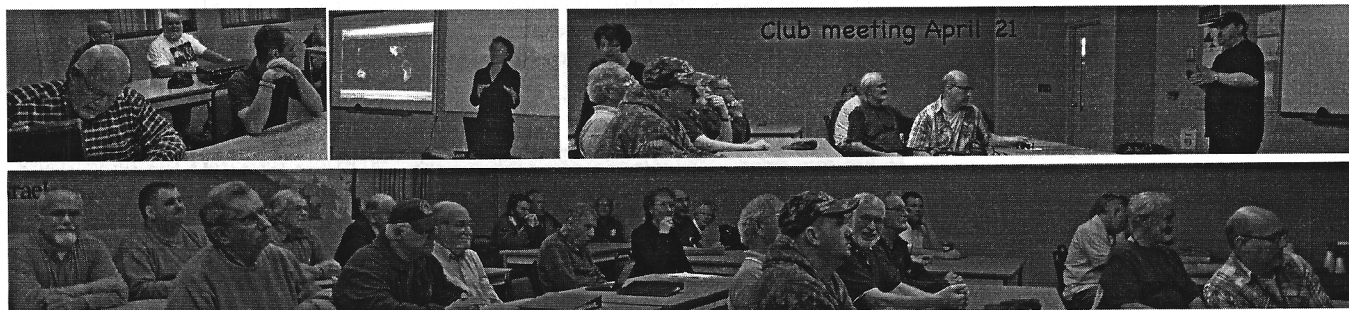
Interim Treasurer

Fred Robinson, VE3GCP
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Director

Brian Bowie, VA3BMB
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presented. However it is still an interesting read. The book is 107 pages long and has a number of interesting photos of early Canadian ham stations, people and other items. At the end of the book is what appears to be a "complete" list of all licensed hams in Canada as of the years 1926-27. On page 62 there is even a write up of our own

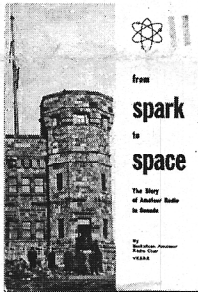


Hamilton Amateur Radio Club as it was in it's early days.

This book is free for download. It is a PDF file and is fairly large at 42 megabytes so you might want to right click and save the file rather than read it online as I found the download speed to be quite slow. Here is the location of the web page: <<http://www.ve5aa.dyndns.org/>>

Just scroll down to the bottom of the page and you will see the link "From Spark To Space". Enjoy.

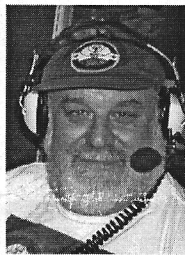
Thanks for the tip, John. After reading your article I looked at the Saskatoon ARC web site and saw the book. Indeed, From Spark to Space does provide an interesting look at the early days of amateur radio in Canada including an insight about our own club's beginnings. Much appreciated. Ed.



ONTARIO QSO PARTY 2010 Story

by Contest Chair
Rick Danby, VE3BK

This is a uniquely Canadian contest, specifically for Ontario, this is one of the reasons we like this one so much, also the fact that we won it outright for about the first 7 years it was on the air, may have something to do with that hi hi.



I just finished working some of the Florida QSO Party from the home station on the weekend. Band conditions weren't very good and I was busy on the Saturday of April 24 so when I checked to see if I could hear anyone in Florida on 20m, I couldn't hear anyone so left it till Sunday. Sunday was much better, but not great and when I had worked all I could hear (band was dropping out

too), I went to CW.....lots of activity there. I checked on 15m and heard only one guy on CW so worked him. I had checked 10m....nothing..checking 40m could only hear the odd ragchewers' conversation, so back to 20m. Took lots of breaks so had different stations when I went back to 20m. More CW and the odd one that I had not worked on phone. Ended up working only 20m and 15m. Now the whole point here is that you have to move around and check different bands at different times to make contacts and to make the most of conditions.

The band conditions for the OQP were really kind of strange and yet we increased our score from last year by about 25%. Now there may be a reason for this: I think our operators are getting more experienced, finding where the other stations are, not just calling CQ on a dead band. This is one reason I like HF. It is always a learning experience in that depending on the Sunspot activity and the part of the cycle you are in, it makes a difference on where you can talk. This is HF radio, not always an exact science. If you like the thrill of getting through to another Ham in South Africa or Australia, then this is part of the hobby you should like. Jack VE3WBT did just that. Another thing that happened was that Dan VA3DJ worked New Zealand on 80m, a first for him, this on a temporary antenna that we had to repair before the contest even began. He also was able to work Ian VA3SOF locally, a club member who helps us with contesting sometimes, even though we experienced some dead time on 80m...not an usual event. Jim VE3EEZ, besides working Canada and the US, contacted Scotland, England, Germany, Puerto Rico, Alaska and the Netherlands.....not really the best points for this contest (but does increase our multipliers, check OQP rules), but lots of fun. Sherry VE3DCU was on 2m and 6m and was able to work a few of the Club members like Steve VE3OZO (who brought out his wife Deb to visit), Gary VE3TTO and others that we hear in many contests. We also

HARC 2009-2010 Chairs

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Web Master
Anita Thomas VA3ANI,
<va3ani@hamiltonarc.ca> and
Emsley Mitchell VE3JAI / VA3QI
<ve3jai@hamiltonarc.ca>

worked one of the executive Mike VE3XMS on 6m. He came to visit as well and to see the contesting operation. One of the things that shows that we are getting more experienced and operating to the best of our abilities is that we passed some of these stations around. I know I worked Gary VE3TTO on 40m when Sherry sent him over to me and I sent some of the stations over to the 2m frequency she was on. Adam VE3BAU was a powerhouse operator on Saturday as was Fred on Sunday, racking up the points in short time. Jesse, Jim's son came out on Sunday and helped his Dad get the most out of 20m. We still had to keep moving around to get the most out of the experience. Jim also had a go at 80m and worked one of the local rovers Kevin VE3KPP who had another Kevin VE3WKG with him. We worked him on 80m as well as Tracy VA3CDU and husband Tom VA3TVW. We only seemed to work the Rovers on 80m but were able to count up 6 counties each. John VE3DVV was also out to help on Saturday and was able to get many in the log on 40m. Something that really surprised me was the number of stations that Jack VE3WBT was able to work on 160m. He did well, working 15m too, when it was open but 160m was the big point getter. While Fred was on 40m on Sunday, I tuned up 15m (which I thought was dead) to see if I could work any locals. Some points are better than none and figured some of the other locals would be doing the same as 15m was pretty sparse. Well I worked some locals as planned and then surprise: IK6CPD in Italy calls me. I nearly fell out of my chair...he was a legit contact (check his bio on qrz.com) and proved to me what weird conditions we experience this contest weekend.

We had a good time, even if the bands went totally dead a couple of times on the weekend. If it went dead for us, we must remember that it is the same for all the other stations. This is a great time to have lunch or ragchew with your fellow contesters, making the whole experience more enjoyable, all part of the hobby. Think about joining us

or at least getting on and working us in the next one. Field Day is coming up, our next big contest is Canada Day July 1st, but there are always contests on all the time that you can enjoy from home, so get your antennas ready, turn on that HF rig and give out some points. You will be surprised at how much fun this can be.....probably why you became a ham in the first place.

Participants included:
 Dan, VA3DJ; Rick VE3BK; Adam VE3BAU; Sherry VE3DCU; John VE3DVV; Jim VE3EEZ & son Jesse; Fred VE3GCP; Jack VE3WBT.

Visitor(s) (no logging or operating)
 Mike Christmas VE3XMS;
 Steve, VE3OZO & wife Deb.

Results by BAND, # of QSOs and Multiplier points

160 meters	42	33
80 meters	163	69
40 meters	309	62
20 meters	129	33
15 meters	12	4
10 meters	0	0
6 meters	4	3
..2 meters	16	8

SOAPBOX: [This gets submitted to contest organizers with our official log. Ed.] Our group has always enjoyed doing this contest. We were very successful for many years taking top spot. Now the interest is much greater and we have more fun working the contest. The band conditions this time were very different. The bands went dead a couple of times, but if you were on there constantly, it seems that those that were, did better than last year.

We certainly did, and even worked some unusual DX because the propagation seemed long. This is the first time we worked New Zealand on 80m. I thought 15m was dead and hoping for locals when I was called by a fellow in Italy. Totally weird conditions. We were only able to work the Rovers on 80m it seemed.

Hope those brave hearts had as much fun as we did.
 73 Rick VE3BK

Important Points

Executive Meetings

HARC Executive committee meets each month, except July and August. Members are invited to attend. The meetings are on the Wednesday following the club General Meeting each month. Ask an executive member for the location.

VE3NCF 146.760 - & 444.075 + using tone 131.8

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 at 7:30 p.m. HARC "swap net" follows at 8 p.m. All contacts are welcome.

Examinations

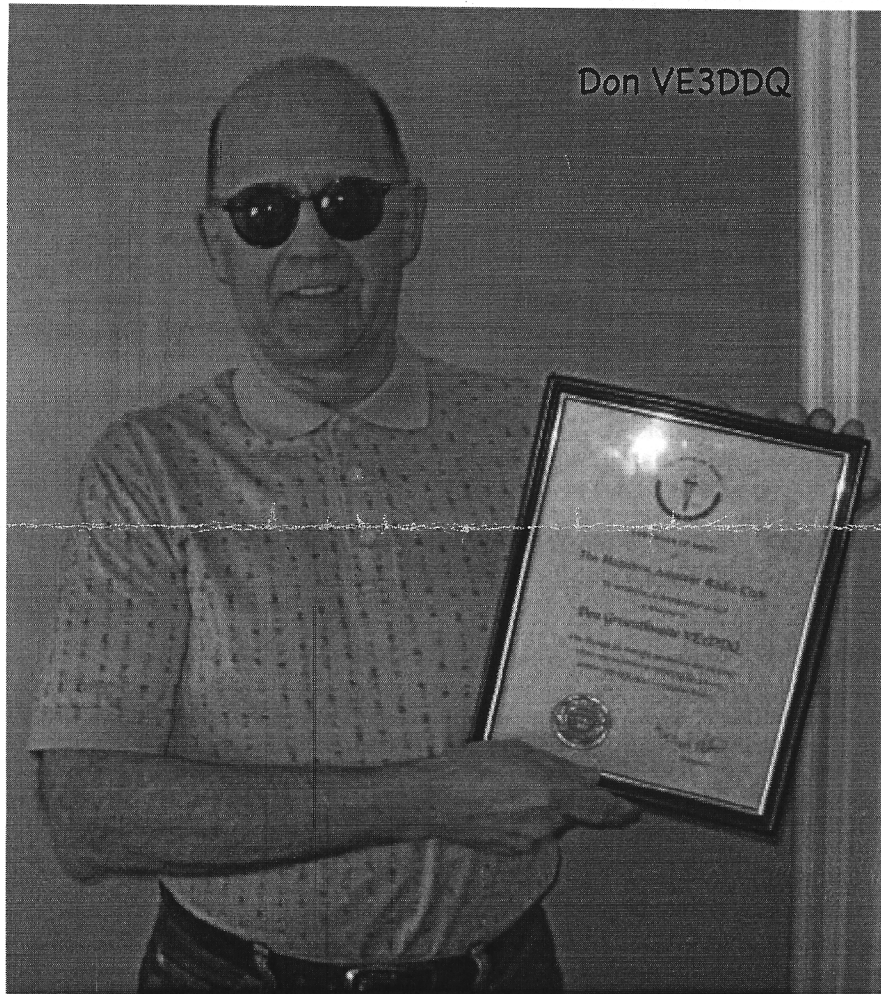
Amateur radio license examinations are conducted the second Wednesday of each month, except July and August. Contact the voluntary examiners to make an appointment. There will be a fee for each examination.

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 factual content. E-mail submissions to Editor, Mardy Eedson, VE3QEE, <ve3qee@hamiltonarc.ca>



With Sincere Thanks

by Fred VE3GCP

It is with a sincere thank you and appreciation that the executive and members of the HARC chose to present Don Grisenthwait VE3DDQ with a token of appreciation for his long term dedication to our members and friends of the club. Many of you know of Don as the Swap Net Manager but have never met him. For most practical purposes Don is a White Caner and uses special magnification equipment to allow him to read hard copy and emails. The award he received is the HARC "Order of Merit" which is presented in recognition and appreciation of distinguished service in assisting the objectives of the club. The award takes the form of a certificate mounted in a frame which is kept by the recipient.

Just recently I was honoured when the executive asked if I would present the award to Don at his home. Due to health matters it is not easy for Don to get to meetings so I was pleased to do this.

If you hear Don on the air please don't hesitate to extend your personal thanks for his efforts over the past several years.

A Special Request

From the executive submitted by Vice President, John Hudak VE3CXB

You may have noticed that the sign in sheet that we pass around at the club meetings now has an extra column for your email address. The reason for this is that we have set up an email distribution list. Anita, VA3ANI has set this up as part of her duties

as keeper of the club web site. The purpose of this email list is to be able to send out messages of importance to club members. For example those on the list will have received the reminder that the March club meeting was moved forward one week, so this is the sort of thing that the email list would be used for. Of course we realize that not everyone will want to be on this list, and that is OK. The regular channels of communication such as the newsletter and nets will still be used. This is just an additional way of disseminating info in addition to the other means. For those who choose to be on the list we will not spam you or flood your inbox with messages. And your email address will never be given out to anyone else or any other organization. Also your names and addresses will not be revealed in the header in the "To:" line of the emails that are sent out. The list will stay within the confines of the club and be used only for club purposes. So if you'd like to take advantage of this additional information route please remember to put your email address on the sheet at the next club meeting, or if you can't make it to the meetings let Anita know by sending an email to <va3ani@hamiltonarc.ca>. And if you have any questions about this please ask.

Got Noise?

by Mardy Edson, VE3QEE

I have noticed, and have heard others comment that the HF bands seem noisier lately. Have you noticed this? On our Monday night HF net, (14.135 MHz 7:30 P.M.), there is often a huge amount of noise such that signals are received just above noise. Sometimes the noise actually de-senses the receiver washing out wanted signals. At my location I experience this de-sensing when a noise source suddenly begins during of our net. The amount of signal loss is like loss you notice when someone tunes up on your frequency.

Without tracking down individual noisy items it is difficult to say with assurance what type of noise we are hearing or where the noise is coming from. However I realize over the last few years, while noise has been increasing, there has also been a huge increase in the use of consumer electronic items many of which are capable of producing noise. How many items in the following list have been installed in your house lately, items that were never present before or items that are now present in greater numbers than before?

- compact florescent lights
- "wall wart" power supplies
- Wi-Fi devices like: personal computers especially laptops; video gaming devices; smart phones and PDAs (personal digital assistants); wireless routers; Blue Tooth headsets; wireless peripherals like mice and keyboards.

I suspect that these items and our new lifestyle using them have collectively contributed to increased background noise and the potential for conducted noise on cables attached to our equipment.

According to several articles I have been reading, a lot of noise is actually "common mode" interference conducted into radio equipment and this noise may originate within the home. These articles claim that you can reduce that noise by using ferrite suppression devices and the articles go on to show how to make these devices and where to install them.

I need to do something about noise at my QTH to get it reduced. If you are feeling the same way you may be interested in the following information.

For what it is worth, here are two helpful, well illustrated articles by authors with good credentials. They can both be found, right now, on the internet.

A Ham's Guide to RFI, Ferrites, Baluns, and Audio Interfacing by Jim Brown K9YC [65 pages long]

<http://www.audiosystemsgroup.com/K9YC/K9YC.htm>

- and -

Common-Mode Chokes by Chuck Counselman, WIHIS [42 pages long]
<http://www.dxzone.com/cgi-bin/dir/jump2.cgi?ID=13273>

You may recall back in May 2009 when guest speaker George Gorseline, VE3YV spoke to our club. George shared his experiences as an award winning DX hunter operating in a noisy urban environment in downtown Toronto. George also talked about this problem and made several recommendations to help those among us hear better in a noisy environment. One of his recommendations was to install RF suppression on BOTH ends of the feedline.

This same advice seems to be coming from many sources. It could be time to pay attention and try out a few of the suggested solutions.

Field Day Band Captains' Meeting

Announcement submitted by Rick VE3BK on behalf of this year's Field Day Chair, Dan Martinak VA3DJ.

This is for anyone interested in the Field Day meeting at Dan's place, Tuesday May 18, 2010 (the day before our Club Meeting).

I am sending this to Contest Group and Executive members. If you know of anyone else that wants to participate or help out, please feel free to forward this email or tell them about the meeting. Dan's place:

VA3DJ, Dan Martinak
897 MUD STREET EAST, STONEY CREEK ON, L8J 3C1 phone number is 905-643-6390 or email va3dj@quickcllc.net

Dan asked me to notify everyone I thought might be interested in Field Day.

The quick and easy way to Dan's house is to take the Link to Stonechurch and Mud St. cutoff (before you go on the Redhill), then

go on Mud street, past the Tim Horton's at 20 Hwy (Centennial Parkway), straight out Mud Street, through Tapleystown. He is on the left side just past the 8th concession.

Turn in the 2nd driveway, just before you get to the big tower. The big tower is actually a service provider's tower that is on the property line between Dan's place and the property past Dan's. Anyone interested is welcome.

News About Town

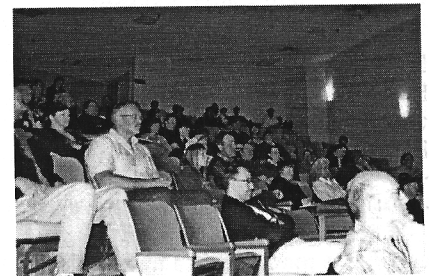
By Mardy Eedson, VE3QEE

CANWARN

Lorraine VAENZ reports that the CANWARN training session at Nash Auditorium, was well attended. There were 130 participants signing in on Saturday morning. A number of people taking the severe weather course are licensed ham radio operators although anyone can be a weather spotter. Reportedly, meteorologists from Environment Canada are pleased with the turnout and with the level of CANWARN involvement in our area.

Following the presentation, Anita VA3ANI walked us through the local CANWARN web site found at canwarnhamilton.ca

On this site CANWARN net frequencies and tones are listed as well as up-to-date weather information. If you want to know whether to take a coat, check the net at canwarnhamilton.ca. In addition to current conditions, there are links to training materials and a map showing weather advisories. Check it out.



CANWARN at Nash Auditorium

CAP Walkathon

Paul Selvey VE3XPS reported that there were several hams helping with this spring's Cancer Assistance Program (CAP) walkathon. Thanks to operators VE3XPS Paul, VE3TTO-Gary, VA3DAJ-Debbie John, and VA3BML- Bonnie, for their help. It was a busy weekend with a lot of ham radio activities taking place so organizers were grateful for the radio amateurs who volunteered to cover this event.

ALS Walkathon

We will be asking for two meter radio operators to assist with the annual ALS Walkathon at Bayfront Park on Saturday, June 5th. We assisted with communication for this event two years ago, but last year due to short lead time we did not field a team. Organizers missed our help and they have asked once again if we can provide a communication team. It is an easy event to cover. The start finish line is at Bayfront Park where we used to staff a tent for the City Emergency Preparedness display. The walkers follow the paved trail westward along the south shore, under the High Level Bridge, and along Cootes' Paradise to Princess Point parking lot before turning around for the trip back. There will be lots of walkers traveling in teams. Along the way are park benches and great views. When the weather cooperates the surroundings are quite enjoyable. Please indicate if you would be available as part of a communication team for this event. Mardy Eedson, or any member of the executive will be pleased to gather names of volunteers. (See the sidebar for contact information.)

Lighthouse Event

Every year for the past few years we have had a small team of Hams on the Beach Strip "activate" the Hamilton Lighthouse during the third week of August for the Lighthouse and Lightship publicity event. We usually go on Saturday and again on Sunday from 9:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M. This is not a contest. It is an

opportunity to set up a station in a public place and contact similar groups in other areas wherever there is an active lighthouse. We have permission to set up on a park bench under a roof at the public works building with electricity and washroom facilities. There are lots of people using this area and a number of them ask questions about amateur radio. It is an opportunity to have some fun and showcase our hobby. If you are interested in getting details, talk to Mike Krebs, or Rick, or one of the executive.

Paris to Ancaster Bike Race

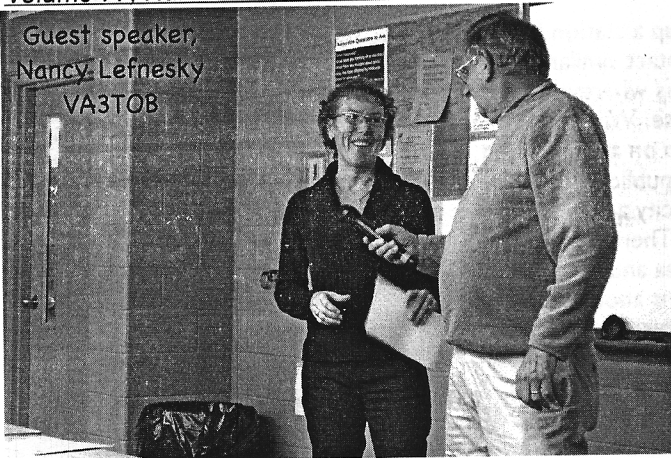
The day of the races radio operators met in the Egg and I for breakfast and instructions. We got scolded by the waitress for not going to the back room where privacy and a long table had been reserved for the group. Next year we'll try to do better. There were over 2000 bikes in the race this year. The weather was great and the race went off without a hitch. Thanks to Gary Notto VE3TTO for organizing the ham volunteers. Net control was excellent. Policing was good. All in all it was a very enjoyable event.

- Top picture breakfast and meeting the other volunteers. Gary briefing us and handing out assignments.
- Racers along the route near Paris going for the lead..
- Racers preparing to cross Hwy 52 while Police hold back traffic.
- Tired racers at the finish line loading bikes for the trip back home.
- For five bucks in the bike corral you can power spray mud off your bike. The money goes to charity.
- Crowd of racers in Morgan Firestone Arena where awards are being given and refreshments are being served.

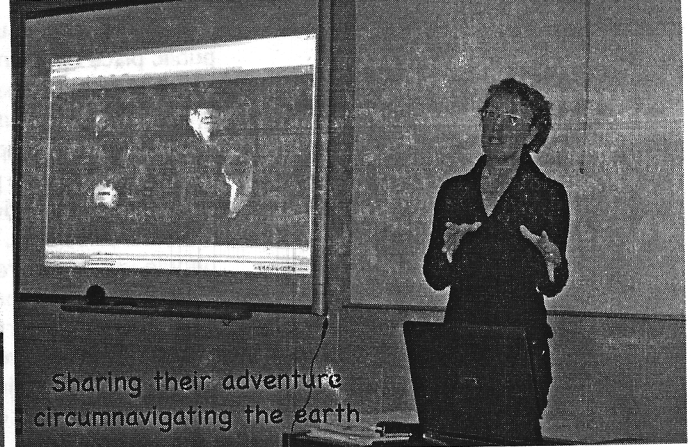
Swapnet Listing

There is one listing, ad #97. Mobile 10 Meter Band Transceiver Model HTX-100 Full featured mobile SSB/CW. Like new condition, asking \$100.00 Firm. Contact Serafino Verticchio VA3SV, in Stoney Creek at 905-662-4536

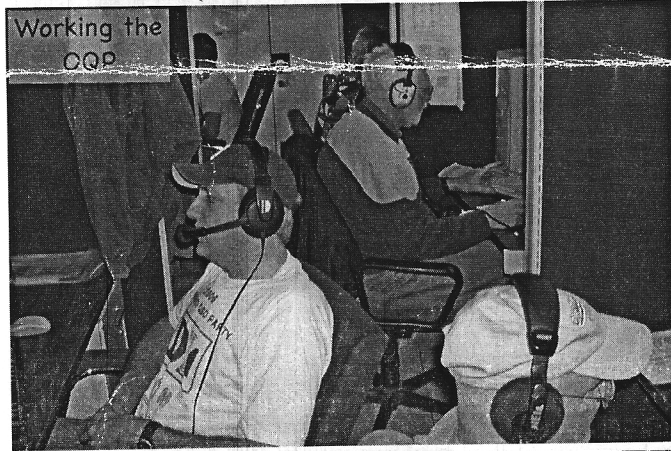




Guest speaker,
Nancy Lefnesky
VA3TOB



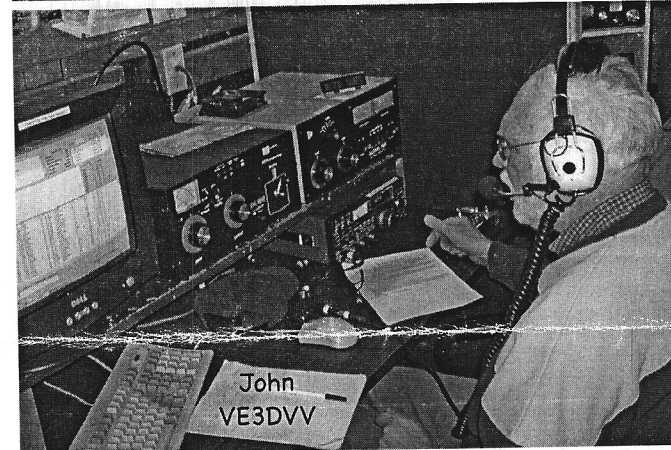
Sharing their adventure
circumnavigating the earth



Working the
CQP



Sherry
VE3DCU



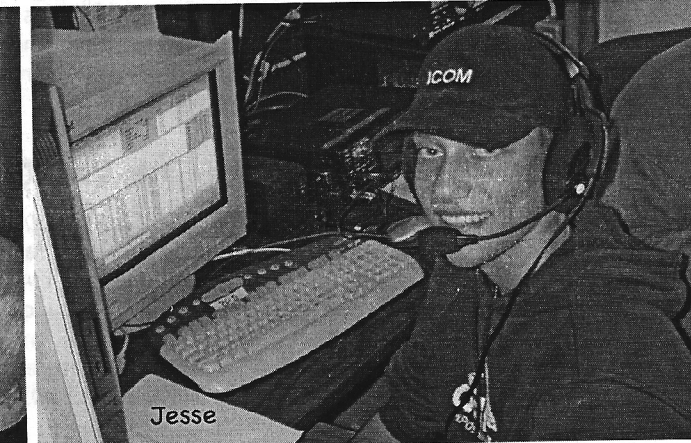
John
VE3DVV



Jack
VE3WBT



Fred
VE3GCP



Jesse