From the Gavel, March 2013

Don’t Panic

Quite aside from being generally sound advice, it is the key tagline from that most stupendous of comic science fiction books, “The Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy”.

Given that I procrastinated writing this article for so long that my writing of it coincides with the birthday of the progenitor of the radio serial, television series, book stream and motion picture, Douglas Adams, he seemed a useful touchstone to write about.

Because “Don’t Panic” also makes good advice for the amateur radio operator, be they an ARES-trained volunteer or regular ham-citizen, and comes from the same “Keep Calm and Carry On” tradition that the British stiff-upper-lip is so famous for. (Although I suppose that for the AM aficionado, that would have to be “Carrier On”.)

Douglas’ source material stretched far and wide as his characterizations of people and planets that his protagonists met along their path.

Similarly one’s amateur career can take a roundabout course - I regularly meet people who have gone quite for some years, and who are now reentering the hobby with some new idea in mind.

We love the old, perhaps try the new, and above all hopefully have a little fun.

Don’t Panic: field day is a good exercise to get experience operating from an emergency-type setup. Running on generator power, potentially in the elements (rain, generally not snow!), and dealing with other outdoor hazards are good practice for any future contingency.

Don’t Panic: walks are both a way to wave the radio flag, but also provide a useful service to our community, in a very local setting.

Don’t Panic: as long as there are Amateurs looking for a bargain, Ham-Ex attendance will be solid, and as long as we continue to have members with basements they need to empty, in order to buy more stuff at the next ham-fest, our club table will have some excellent items.

So mix yourself a Pan-Galactic Gargle Blaster if you dare, and light up that radio transmitter.

And yes, I do know where my towel is.

Keep on radiating signals

Scott  VA3NMI
The Communicator

This is the March 2013 edition of the Editors Column

So now that we have survived the wrath of February we only have to hope the groundhog was right and the lion indeed came before the lamb, (who let all the animals into this article anyway?). I would first like to thank those who commented positively to last month’s newsletter revamp and layout redesign, thank you very much.

On that note, even the best-designed publication, electronic or printed, is still reliant on content. Without content, the publication would be nothing more than a header, title, logo, and the incessant whining words of the editor going on about not having anything to publish. I must apologize about my somewhat sarcastic email a few days ago on this very subject, so I’m sorry.

I had intentions of asking permission to reprint a couple of interesting articles from various printed or online sources of relevant content, however as most of my time these days is spent looking for a new job, so as to keep the lights on so to speak, I seemed to run out of time to reach the loft heights of that hope, maybe next month.

To other topics, as you will read in Rick Browns article later in the newsletter, it will very soon be HAMEX 2013, always a good time to be had by all. Also an excellent time unload some of the “junk” that maybe laying around your shack that you have been tripping over and meaning to get it out of the house, it also might earn a couple of bonus points with your spouse, (and that can never hurt).

Also as the weather warms up it is a good time to start thinking about getting outside checking those antenna cables and connections and see how they fared over the winter. Indeed as the ground softens an excellent time to check those ground rods and connections, with that good ground you thought you have the lighting protection is mostly useless, and copper has a nasty habit of oxidizing, and possibly not being as conductive as was originally thought. So I hope to see you all at HAMEX 2013, have a chin wag, and maybe one of those “unbelievable” hot dogs they serve and the Brampton Fair Ground world class kitchens, that reminds me have to buy a roll of “TUMS” for the event, you can never be too prepared you know.

So please keep the submissions coming, and please, keep them on a relevant topic, ham radio, electronics, and or hobby related. Even though mildly amusing something that show up are, I get enough email. Also please remember there is a mailbox for submissions, themarcnewsletterdesk@gmail.com, there just for that reason.

Valentine Stubbs, VE3VVS.

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Ontario South Director’s Report – March 2013

Delayed greetings from your RAC Southern Ontario Director. The winter is slowly releasing its icy grip from us and in a few short weeks spring will arrive. Indeed, I heard a cardinal singing away the other day so I know we’re getting close!

Distracted Driving

A reminder that the Minister of Transportation granted amateur radio operators in Ontario an additional 5 year exemption from the distracted driving legislation. RAC will continue to work to achieve a permanent exemption. In the meantime, whenever you are operating mobile in Ontario RAC recommends you carry your Industry Canada-issued Certificate of Proficiency in Amateur radio and a copy Ontario Regulation 253/12 which outlines the amended exemption. You can find it on-line at:


New Ontario Section Managers

Since the official implementation of the new RAC Field Organization in Ontario on September 1, Ian Snow, VA3QT is your new Ontario South Section Manager and George Duffield, VE3WKJ is your new Greater Toronto Area Section Manager. A big thank you to Ian and George for stepping up into these two important roles. Both have reached out to clubs and club presidents in Southern Ontario to establish an ongoing dialogue between RAC and the amateur radio community.

Hamfests and Fleamarkets

On February 2, I attended the Niagara Peninsula ARC hamfest in St. Catharines. I received positive feedback with respect to the new eTCA and paper-TCA RAC memberships. On Saturday, March 23, Stan Leschinsky, VE3TW and I will be attending Ham-Ex sponsored by the Peel and Mississauga ARC’s and being held at the Brampton Fairgrounds. And on April 20, Stan will be attending the Durham Region hamfest sponsored by the South Pickering and North Shore ARC’s and being held at the Pickering Recreation Complex. If you can, come out and support your local hamfests and flea markets.
2013 RAC Planning Session

On the weekend of February 15-17, RAC Directors and most Executive Officers met in Ottawa for a planning meeting. A recent RAC bulletin 2013-005E provides more details into the issues discussed and plans for the future of your national amateur radio organization. Some highlights include:

- Increasing the number of active hams in Canada
- Promoting and assisting in the educating of new hams
- Identifying key demographics and growing RAC membership in those areas
- Enhancing the relevance and respect of amateur radio in the eyes of the public and use that support when working with government

It was at the last planning session in October 2010 that RAC found itself at a crossroads. But through the hard work and dedication of the Directors and Executive Officers, RAC has survived. We are financially solvent and our membership base has stabilized and grown slightly. However, RAC needs to continue to grow. In order to achieve our goals over the next 2-5 years and to continue providing national and international representation for Canadian hams, RAC will be pursuing additional revenue streams to support these endeavors. And on behalf of RAC, I thank you for your continued support.

73,

Jeff VA3WXM,

RAC Ontario South Director

MARC Members Yahoo Group

The MARC Members Yahoo Group is the primary way
To disseminate club information about upcoming events

Join the MARC Members Yahoo Group
To receive club related communications and to contact other club members

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/marc_members/
I HATE FOOT SWITCHES AND HEADSET MICS
OR MORE LIKELY THEY HATE ME

For some reason foot switches and I cannot get along. The first time I used one was at the club station. Just as I tried to tamp down on it my foot missed and I stubbed my toe.

The next time I wound up stepping on the cord, but missing the switch altogether. Then after using it for a while the arch in my foot hurt: so I switched to the other foot, and its arch eventually hurt too. Then my knees began to hurt.

The foot switch at the club station wanders; it is never where you think it is. If you bend down to see where it is, you could bang your head on the table. The cord can get tangled on your leg, pulling it even further from your foot. So I decided to stick with a hand switch. But what kind of hand switch? Well, I settled on using a wired computer mouse.

The micro switches on a mouse are ideal for the PTT purpose, and I chose to use the left switch. The mouse fits nicely in the palm of my hand and I was able to run the cable from it into a phone plug to plug into the foot switch socket on my Heil desk mic. Yes, I use a desk mike: headset mic's annoy me, floating in front of my face making me feel like the drive-thru order taker at Burger King. For sure, foot switches are banned in my shack, but computer mice are king.

With my CBS style Heil desk mic,1950’s style, I can operate, all the while sitting back imagining that I am Walter Cronkite, and as he said every day:

“that’s the way it is”.

Lorne Jackson

VE3CXT

MARC First Sunday of the Month Breakfast
The monthly club Sunday breakfasts are the first Sunday of the month, “Come One, Come All”
The location: 08:30 at Bobbie’s Hideaway Restaurant,
20 Queen St North in Streetsville. (NW corner of Britannia Rd/Queen St. N in Streetsville
Ham-ex 2013 is here!

Grab your cheque books and bring a friend. The Ham-ex committee has been busy organizing and promoting the event. Things are shaping up for another banner year. While handing out flyers at the St. Catharines and Burlington flea markets, I received a lot of positive feedback on our event. At the time of this writing, most of the tables have been sold and the major vendors and exhibitors have been confirmed.

Mark your calendars for the morning of Saturday, March 23. The event takes place at the Brampton Fairgrounds at Heart Lake & Old School Road. Talk-in is on the Peel and Mississauga Repeaters. Doors open at 8am for the exhibit hall and catered breakfast. Vendor hall opens to the public at 9am. Admission is still $7, free for MARC Volunteers helping out at the event. The event wraps up with the prize draws at about 11:30am. Complete details of the event and directions can be found at the Ham-ex web site www.ham-ex.ca.

Last year Ki Hip Boo VA3PEN from our club won the Radio World $1000 gift certificate grand prize, so get your tickets now! You can get them from Lorne VE3CXT before the event, 3 for $10. Of course, if you are one of those procrastinators, you can purchase them at Ham-ex too.

Thanks to all the volunteers who are helping out on the big day. Your help is the main reason the event runs like clockwork. See you the there!

Rick Brown (VE3IMG) Ham-ex Co-Chair
CLUB CALENDAR FOR 2013

March, 2013
01 Fri ARRL International DX Contest – SSB
03 Sun Sunday Brunch – Bobbie’s Hideaway Restaurant
03 Sun HF - 75/80 Meter Net
05 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Meter Net
07 Thu Exec Meeting
10 Sun HF - 75/80 Meter Net
12 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Meter Net
14 Thu Club Meeting - Speaker's night
17 Sun HF - 75/80 Meter Net
19 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Meter Net
21 Thu ARES Meeting
24 Sun HF - 75/80 Meter Net
26 Tue VHF/UHF - 2 Meter Net
28 Thu Club Meeting - Speaker's night

Notes:
1) Club meetings start 7:30PM at St. Thomas A Becket Church Hall, 3535 South Common Court unless otherwise noted.
2) Sunday brunch is held at 8:30AM on the first Sunday of each month at Bobby’s Hideaway Restaurant, 20 Queen St,
3) Streetsville (NW corner of Britannia Rd/Queen St in Streetsville)
4) ARES Meetings start at 7:30PM at the Red Cross, Ontario Zone Office (OZONE), 5700 Cancross Court, Mississauga, ON.
5) Executive meetings start 7:30PM at the Club Station, Danmax Electronics, 2311 Anderson Drive Unit B, Mississauga.
6) The Basic Classes start at 7:00 pm at the Red Cross OZONE, 5700 Cancross Court, Mississauga - Peel Training Room

Visit our website: http://www.marc.on.ca for any updates of the calendar.

MARC Project Nights

The MARC Project Nights up coming are:

March 12, 26
April 9, 23
May 14, 28
June 11, 25
RAC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/TCA SUBSCRIPTION OPTIONS

For two- or three-year memberships or renewals please contact the RAC Office given at bottom of this page.

Please indicate New or Renewal:

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<tr>
<td>1 year RAC membership; @$52.00 plus GST or HST as applicable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total $54.60 in AB, MB, NT, NU, MB, PE, QC, SK, YT (5%)</td>
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<td>Total $58.76 in NB, NL, ON (13%). Total $59.80 in NS (15%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 year RAC membership only; for a blind person NO MAGAZINE @$25.00 plus GST or HST as applicable</td>
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<td>Total $26.25 in AB, MB, NT, NU, MB, PE, QC, SK, YT (5%)</td>
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<td>Total $28.25 in NB, NL, ON (13%). Total $28.75 in NS (15%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family membership; price per extra family member @ $25.00 plus GST or HST as applicable per year (one TCA per family) (Does not apply to simple subscriptions.)</td>
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<td>Total $26.25 per person in AB, MB, NT, NU, MB, PE, QC, SK, YT (5%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total $28.25 per person in NB, NL, ON (13%). Total $28.75 per person in NS (15%)</td>
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Donation to the RAC Foundation enclosed
Donation to the Defence of Amateur Radio Fund enclosed
Donation to the Youth Education Programme enclosed
Donation to the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) Programme enclosed

Grand Total:

Visa/MasterCard No: Card Expiry Date (MM/YY):

Security code on back of card (CVV2):

Name of person credit card is issued to:

Mail to:
Radio Amateurs of Canada Inc.
720 Belfast Road, Suite 217
Ottawa, ON, K1G 0Z5
Telephone #: 614-244-4367 or 877-273-8304, Fax: 613-244-4369
Email: rachq@rac.ca