



The **NEWSCASTER**

The Official Publication of the Winnipeg Amateur Radio Club
<http://www.virtualmultimedia.com/warc/>

February 2001

Free to Members

vol: 2001-02

Fire Prevention Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service

Date: February 12th, 2001
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: Sturgeon Creek Regional Secondary School

Other Important Dates:

Articles: Feb 28 - Article Deadline March Newscaster

WARC: Mar 12 - Homebrew Night
Apr 9 - Meeting TBA
Apr 22 - Flea Market
May 14, Jun 11 - Meetings TBA
June 22 & 23 - Field Day

WSC: Feb 17 & 18 - G.O.T.A.

ARES: Feb 10-11 Festival du Voyager Sled Dog Races
Feb 20 - Near Vertical Incidence Skywave
Feb 27 - familiarization @ Winnipeg EOC
Mar 13 - familiarization @ MHEOC

Other: Thursday 9:00pm - MRS Net 147.390 MHz +
Sunday 1:00pm - MRS Net 147.390 MHz +

WARC: Executive for 2001			
Past President	Norm Coull	VE4EH	885-1692
President	Darcy Wilson	VE4DDW	783-0421
Vice-Pres./ PR	Tom Mills	VE4SE	837-6915
Secretary	Ruthie Maman	VE4CRS	589-6718
Treasurer	Sue Collings	VE4SYM	694-1525
Membership	Mariska Maguire	VE4MMG	256-3143
Program	David Rosner	VE4DAR	489-4106
Goodwill	Vern Dutton	VE4VQ	256-5346

RADIOGRAM FROM THE PRESIDENT: by Darcy, VE4DDW

Hello everyone,

It's been one of the best Januarys that I can remember. The weather has been absolutely wonderful since the New Year has entered. I hope you all had an opportunity to get out and enjoy some fresh air while it lasted. I'm going to keep it short this month so we can fit in all the letters that need to be printed. I want everybody to realize that these letters represent the end to this piece of controversy. We've worked hard as your executive to try to make the club informative, exciting, and fun for all of our members. I know we can't make everybody happy all the time, but sometimes the solution to a problem doesn't rest in the minds of the executive. Our hobby is about communication.... try to remember that when you start to write a nasty letter to somebody. Communicate with the person you want to talk to. Set aside your differences; be mature, and open. Don't let past situations cloud your judgment, be fair and come to an agreement.

Below are letters to the editor, followed by the response from behalf of the club.

I'd like to take a few moments to explain the background for the current situation regarding the club newsletter.

The last few months have been a very difficult time for the Board of Directors of this club. We've been presented with a few challenging situations. The first is a letter to the general membership, explaining the opinions and views on the operation of the club, from one person's point of view. By publishing this letter, it was apparent that some folks disagree with those views. That is understandable... we can not, and should not expect everyone to agree on the same issues. That's what this society is all about.

In response to this letter, the club has also received a letter from another member. After the decision to publish the first letter from Pat VE4PLG, the executive decided that it might not be in the best interest of the club to allow these

types of personal letters to be published in the Newscaster. However, this decision caused confusion on the part of the respondent, Jeff VE4MBQ. After more discussion we agreed that this response should be allowed to be made publicly as well.

In a few moments I will read the response from the Board of directors addressed to Pat VE4PLG, as well as the response from Jeff VE4MBQ. These two letters will also be published in the Feb edition of the WARC Newscaster. That's not where the problems end though.

We've also published an article submitted by Eric Champagne VE4EPC regarding radio procedure. Unfortunately one of our members took offense to this article, and has asked me as the President of the club to provide an apology on behalf of the WARC. I have sent a written apology to Larry VE4CPU, however this was not satisfactory in his opinion. He has asked that I provide a public apology before this issue can be resolved.

To fulfill that request I will also read out-loud the written response that was provided to Larry.

I hope you all see that, these requests have all required a significant portion of time from the members of the executive. Of course this has also given reason for us to discuss the current procedures for publication of the Newscaster. We've looked at various solutions to these problems, which include a 1 page monthly update from the executive, with no general membership input. Or, allowing only "official business" to be published. But we feel correct in thinking that the majority of the membership, with the exception of a few, would still enjoy a format similar to what we have currently. I like to think that our editor Derek VE4HAY has done an absolutely tremendous job in creating what he has for so long. My only regret is that we did not provide him the courtesy of a set of publishing guidelines for the Newscaster. Derek can not be faulted for any of these recent concerns, and I won't allow anyone to ask his

forgiveness for anything published. I would also like to thank all of the dedicated folks that take the time and effort to research and prepare articles for submission to the Newscaster. I know this is a time consuming task sometimes, but I'm sure most members find these articles to be of great interest. And I ask you all to keep up the good work!

I can assure you that we will come up with a set of guidelines that will suite our needs the best. It may take some time, but it will work out in the end.

January 3, 2001

In reply to: Letter to the editor published Dec 00

Pat Giesbrecht

Dear Pat,

Thank you for your letter dated Nov 00. Your letter has raised many interesting points for our consideration. One of the issues that we want to clarify upfront is: The structure of the Winnipeg Amateur Radio Club (WARC). WARC is a general interest organization, whose purpose is to serve our membership. We do this in part by:

1. Publication of a monthly newsletter (Newscaster),
2. Field Day in June each year, and periodic hosting of the International Ham Fest,
3. Monthly meetings, which attract approx. 50% of our members,
4. Provide information sharing, by giving other organizations a chance to update our members,
5. Social gatherings (i.e. Christmas Party, monthly coffee break) throughout the year,
6. Two flea markets, which serve the amateur/hobbyist community, and
7. Monthly programs.

I'd like take a moment to address some other points raised. Traditionally, WARC has chosen to work cooperatively with other organizations within the amateur community. Over the years, we have created a great relationship with many other clubs that serve amateurs. An obvious example of this is our affiliation with the Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC). Our club is fortunate to have as a members, the Mid-West Director of RAC, Assistant Director, as well as the MB Section Coordinator. We also have a working relationship with the Winnipeg Senior Citizens Radio Club (WSC), Winnipeg Amateur Radio Emergency Service (WARES), and Manitoba Repeater Society (MRS).

Our club has a diverse membership. While the ratio of women to men is small, many of our women members play a very active role in the club. The perfect example is our current Board of Directors (50% men and 50% women).

I trust I have addressed the major points you have raised. If you have any specific concerns or suggestions, please feel free to contact me personally at the address below.

Sincerely, Darcy Wilson, President, Winnipeg ARC



Industry Canada Amateur Centre
 Voice 1-888-780-3333 (toll-free)
 Fax: 1-613-991-5575
 Email: spectrum.amateur@ic.gc.ca
 Web: http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/spectrum

Comments or if you just want to reach us :

Newscaster Editor
Winnipeg Amateur Radio Club
C/O VE4WSC
598 St. Mary's Road
Winnipeg, MB R2M 3L5

Dear Editor:

I am writing in response to the letter from Pat Giesbrecht VE4PLG that you published in the December 2000 issue of The Newscaster. I'm somewhat concerned that an organization can be "slammed" in The Newscaster without being given the chance to respond in the same issue.

Overall I found the letter to be most confusing and contradictory. The first paragraph of Ms Giesbrecht's letter deals mainly with a concern that WARC does not engage in enough volunteer amateur communications for public service events. Fair enough, maybe WARC ought to have a Public Service Coordinator or Public Service Chair. What is unconscionable in her letter though is the assertion that ARES now covers events that WARC used to be involved with. Nothing is farther from the truth. As a matter of fact, one of the first events covered by WPGARES was the St Andrews Air Show in 1994 - WARC had a chance to organize the amateur involvement but the WARC Executive of the day felt that providing amateur communications for an airshow was not in the spirit of what amateur radio was about. WPGARES has covered some events numerous times:

Terry Fox Run 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000

Corporate Rowing Challenge 1996, 1997, 1998

Head of the Red Regatta 1996, 1998, 2000

Cancer Run for the Cure 1996, 1997

Parkinson Superwalk 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000

Festival du Voyager Sled Dog Races 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000

NONE of these events was previously looked after by WARC (at least not since I have been a member), so I cannot understand the assertion "ARES has taken everything we used to do". WPGARES does not poach or cherry-pick events - WPGARES has deliberately not gotten involved with events covered by other radio clubs (e.g. parades covered by CB clubs) nor has it covered any "bicycle races".

Ms. Giesbrecht seems to be troubled that WARC is not the only organization at the WARC Flea Market (i.e. other amateur organizations rent tables from WARC). Yes, WPGARES rents a table for fundraising purposes, but so does MARM, and sometimes WNR. Certainly the tables rented by Comtelco and Prairie Mobile are there to make money - it's strange that only the WPGARES table seems to cause offense. It is my understanding that WARC makes money at the Flea Market from table rental, kitchen operation, and patron admission. I'm certainly baffled as to how a WPGARES fundraising booth takes money away from WARC.

The WPGARES report given at WARC meetings is either a brief overview of the published report or more often, recent updates that did not get into The Newscaster. ARES is a philosophy as much as an organization - for large operations there are not enough ARES members so ARES operations require supplemental help from WARC members (e.g. 1997 Flood Operations, Y2K Operations). In fact WARC members alone operated VE4BB at 17th Wing Ops for Y2K as well as some rural RCMP Detachments. The public service events that WPGARES covers are not closed to

non-members, many WARC members through the years have participated in WPGARES operations. Yet, Ms Giesbrecht says, "We feel left out".

Sincerely,

Jeff Dovyak VE4MBQ

January 3, 2001

In reply to: Email dated 2 Jan 01

Larry Neufeld VE4CPU

Dear Larry,

Thank you for your letter dated 2 Jan 01, which brought to our attention the need to establish a set of guidelines for publication of the Warc Newscaster. Until now the editor has had to use his own judgment in determining content, and has done a remarkable job. Thus, any criticism of the editor is unfair.

We would recommend that any further issues you have regarding the article on radio protocol in the Sept issue of the Newscaster, be directed to the author.

Any further concern regarding the content of the Newscaster can be forwarded to me at the above address.

I hope that this situation has not caused any permanent bad feelings toward the Winnipeg ARC. We appreciate your years of loyal membership to the club and would encourage you to rejoin.

Sincerely yours,

Darcy Wilson, President

News from the Winnipeg Seniors' Radio Club by Gil Frederick, VE4AG

We had the first Board meeting of our new calendar year on January 17, with George, VE4GOM, our new President, officiating. We had a pleasant surprise and diversion, with the sudden appearance of Bob Hall, VE4RJH, in a special regalia, complete with mace, to open the meeting with a "Hear Ye, Hear Ye" call. We won't regale you with all the details here (you'll have to ask a board member), but a motion was passed to install Bob as our official Sargeant-at-Arms! (for LIFE, or until he becomes too tired to perform).

A new member was accepted into the Club - Ross Murdoch, VA4RMM, making our total 184.

Committee Heads were appointed, and this list will be printed in Sparks in February. A budget was approved, with approval for a cash outlay to complete the new Packet station.

It was noted that we still have some fine embroidered 4" round Club Crests available, at \$5.00 each, available from any Duty Officer.

Our hard-working Social Director, George, VE4GNG, reported (with a big smile) that at our last breakfast on Jan. 11, we hit a new record, with 38 attendees! And George also unveiled some more social activities at the Club - a BINGO to be held on Wed. Feb 14, with a hard-times lunch provided (at no cost to members), with novelty prizes, and a \$1.00 Full House, winner takes all. The Bingo will start at 11 a.m., and the lunch will begin at 12:30 p.m. Then, on Wed. March 14, we are to have the Great Canadian Chili Cookoff Contest. We need 5 entrants. Members get to eat the chili after the taste-test is finished. Then, on Wed. April 25, George will host the Mad Hatter's Contest (yes, you go mad with hat designs), with a potluck lunch. More info can be had by reading "Blips 'n' Blurbs", listening to the morning Seniors' Net, and talking to George.

Plans are already being made for the next Christmas Party - looks like a new location and a new caterer. Might cost a little more, but the improvement will be noticeable. Ed, VE4YU, is in charge of this event

The Club is looking for the following donations: kitchen utensils, especially a toaster oven, single fluorescent lamp fixtures, display cabinets, and tools.

And now for some general news ----

February is White Cane Month. Listen for VA3CGD (Canadian Guide Dogs ARA) operating from the Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind Training Centre in Manotick, ON. They will try and be on as much as possible. A special contact certificate is available.

Also listen for VE3SWC, Sarnia White Caner Club. On Wed., February 7, VE3SWC will be operating from the White Cane Centre in Sarnia. For more info, e-mail Jerry, VA3JET at va3jet@xcelco.on.ca.

The Canadian Guide Dogs Amateur Radio Association now has a contest for a logo for their group; it is open to everyone. Contest closes March 15, 2001. For further details, e-mail Bill Cousins, VE3GPR, at ve3gpr@igs.net or go to the CGDARA website: <http://www.va3cgd.net>

GOTA (Girl Guides on the Air) will be in full swing again on the weekend of February 17/18. VE4GGC will be operating from the Seniors' Radio Club from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. each of these days (hours extended if needed). Anyone in contact with Guiding groups, let them know they are welcome to come. Call 233-3122 to arrange best times.

The whole world will be on with Guiders, except the U.K. (which will operate the following weekend). By special request, we can arrange to have VE4GGC active this second weekend for G-only contacts.

Computer people! Here is a net for you. The MicroComputer Network meets on Sundays at 1600Z, on 14.325. NCS is Dave, KD7VA. All platforms, all skill levels are represented, and the expertise of many members is at the

professional level- so any question can be answered and help given.

ARISS (Amateur Radio on the International Space Station) is interested in arranging Amateur Radio contacts between astronauts and school children. School contacts provide an excellent opportunity for young people to find out about Amateur Radio, and to develop an interest in communications technology. Schools must make application, and have an experienced group of Radio Amateurs to assist them in the setup of a station and its operation. RAC will collect the applications along with the required educational proposal. For further School Contact information, go to URL: <http://www.rac.ca/arissedu.htm> and to download the School Application, go to URL: <http://www.rac.ca/arissapp.htm> Other info can be found on the VE4WSC homepage at <http://www.pangea.ca/~ve4wsc> and it will be published in the upcoming Sparks.

Canadian Amateurs are partners in ARISS, the program to develop and put into operation the on-board Amateur station. The initial station is now in operation, and astronauts are available for QSOs in their spare time. Frequencies in use in Canada for general QSOs are: Voice downlink: 145.80; Voice uplink: 144.49; Packet uplink: 145.99.

The Red Cross HQ station, VA3CRC, in Ottawa is nearing completion - in a new building site, on the 8th floor. In the next few weeks, they hope to have some new equipment purchased, and a tower and antenna in place. You can work the net on Sundays, on 14.128, at 1900Z. Use NCS is Vern, VE6RCC, Calgary.

CFARS has announced that digital modes are now authorized for use on all CFARS frequencies. However, at this time, they have placed some restrictions on some. For further info on CFARS, go to their URL: <http://www3.sympatico.ca/gunslinger/cfars.htm>

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Minutes for W.A.R.C. December 11th, 2000 Submitted by David, VE4DAR

Meeting was called to order by President Darcy VE4DDW at 1933 hours. Individual introductions followed. Attendance was 41 members, 7 guests

Moved by Dick VE4HK Seconded by Tom VE4ZV that the minutes of the December 2000 meeting be approved as published in the Newscaster. Passed.

Correspondence:

As preamble to reading correspondence received and correspondence sent in response, Darcy VE4DDW read an overview statement. This statement included a comment supporting the work of the editor, Derek VE4HAY, of the Newscaster. These letters were then read to the meeting:

a. WARC's response to letter from Pat VE4PLG published in the Newscaster.

b. Excerpts of letter from Jeff VE4MBQ to WARC in response to Pat's letter.

c. WARC's response to letter from Larry VE4CPU commenting on item in Newscaster.

Copies of the above are on file and some will be published in the next edition of the Newscaster.

No further comments or discussion followed

Treasurer's Report

for December 2000: Sue VE4SYM

Balance forward		\$5,144.42
Revenue		
Membership dues	\$15.00	
Meeting draw	60.00	
Total monthly revenue	\$75.00	
Expenses		
Photocopies	\$43.10	
Membership draw prize	106.83	
Club insurance	500.00	
Total monthly expenses	\$649.93	

Net income (loss) for the month	(\$574.93)
Book balance as of December 31, 2000	\$4,669.49

Bank balance as of December 31, 2000 (n/a)

R. A. C. Report:

On Jan. 1, 2001, Rick began his next two-year term as the Midwest Director, representing the Radio Amateurs of Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

The long-awaited Canada Gazette Notice from Industry Canada (regarding the proposed changes to the Morse Code eligibility from 12 wpm to 5 wpm for full HF access) was

published on Jan. 6, 2001. We have 60 days to comment. Industry Canada would like to hear from us.

The full text of the proposed changes can be found at:

<http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/ssg/sf05327e.html>

No official starting date has been given.

Programs:

The program for the February 12 meeting is still being finalized. However, Home Brew Night is being advanced to March 12. Previously it has been held in April. So get busy designing and building your projects. Prizes will be offered.

WARES Report

Jeff said he was still looking for volunteers for the Sled Dog Races for Feb 10 & 11.

CANWARN members, who observe some particular Winter Weather events noted below, are asked to notify the weather office at the "usual" 1-800 number. Non-CANWARN amateurs and the public can use 1-800-239-0484. Please report observations of low visibility, freezing rain, freezing drizzle, snowfall accumulations over 6 - 8 cm, and any other hazardous or potentially hazardous elements.

DX Sleuths

The club has not been very active lately. Bouvet Island, a very rare contact, has been on the air through 3Y0C. He's been mostly on sideband at 14.195 or 21.185.

The Government of India has permitted Indian hams to be on 30m until Jan. 31, 2001. Look for a VU call.

Flea Market:

will be April 22, 2001. We are looking for coordinator. Contact the Executive.

Field Day:

will be June 23/24, 2001. Darcy indicated we were planning to hold Field Day at Birds Hill Park again this year. No objections to this site were expressed during the meeting.

Good and Welfare:

Tom VE4SE described an article from the Winnipeg Free Press, which noted that club membership generally was declining. Thus, WARC wasn't alone with this phenomenon.

Rick VE4OV noted that RAC, too, had the same circumstance and were looking into dealing with it.

David VE4DAR noted that WARC's Secretary, Ruthie VE4CRS, was featured in the January/February 2001 edition of The Canadian Amateur on page 43.

Worked All Winnipeg Award:

Dick VE4HK presented the award to a new ham,
Rosie VE4YYL

After coffee break, the member attendance draw was won by Chris VE4SET and the loonie draw was won by Gordon VE4BN.

Presentation:

The Low Bands (160 & 80 m) by Bill VE4UD

A very interesting and well-researched presentation kept the audience involved right to the end of the meeting. Bill, an electrical engineer, has been an amateur radio operator since 1973.

Meeting adjourned at 2200 hours.

RAC Bulletins

www.rac.ca/~racnews/othernotices/racbullemail.htm

RAC Bulletin 01-002E**RAC Announces ARISS School Contact Program**

Following the recent ARISS meeting at Goddard Space Flight centre, RAC is now encouraging Canadian amateurs to help set up radio contacts between school children and astronauts on the International Space Station.

These contacts will be made when there are astronauts who are also radio amateurs on the ISS. For the time being, the astronauts will use two metre fm transceivers.

To participate, amateurs and teachers must work together to prepare a proposal and fill out an application form.

Daniel Lamoureux VE2KA, the RAC representative on the ARISS school selection committee, will collect the proposals and participate in the selection process.

Similar contacts are being set up for schools in Japan, Russia, the USA, and several countries in Europe.

Details of how schools will be selected for the contacts can be found on the ARISS pages of this web site.

<http://www.rac.ca/ariss.htm>

RAC Bulletin**IC issues 5 wpm Gazette Notice**

Industry Canada has issued the long awaited Gazette Notice indicating their intent to amend Radio Information Circular RIC-2, to: "Grant Full Operating Privileges in all Amateur Radio

Frequency Bands Below 30 MHz to Amateur Radio Operators Holding a 5 word per minute (w.p.m.) Morse Code Qualification".

The purpose of the Gazette Notice is to give all Canadians an opportunity to comment on the proposed changes.

Comments should be sent to Industry Canada within 60 days.

The full notice can be found on the Industry Canada Web site at:

<http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/SSG/sf05327e.html>

An unofficial copy is available on the RAC web site at

<http://www.rac.ca/12wpm.htm>

Contest Calendar**February 2001**

03-04	0000-2400	SSB/CW Vermont QSO Party
03-04	Periods	SSB/CW New Hampshire QSO Party
03-04	0000-2400	SSB/CW Maine QSO Party
03-04	2 periods	SSB/CW Delaware QSO Party
03-04	1800-0600	SSB/CW/ RTTY Minnesota QSO
03-04	1800-2400	RTTY Mexican RTTY Contest
03	1600-1900	CW AGCW Straight Key
03-04	1700-0500	Digital Northwest QRP Club Digital
03-04	1600-0400	CW/SSB FYBO Winter QRP Field
04	0000-0359	SSB North America 'Sprint'
04-05	0000-0400	SSB/CW Classic Radio Exchange
05-10	13-01	CW/SSB School Club Roundup
10-11	0000-2400	RTTY Worldwide RTTY WPX
10-11	1200-1200	CW/SSB PACC
10-11	1200-1200	CW/SSB Carnaval of Loulé Contest
10	1100-1300	CW Asia-Pacific Sprint
10-12	1400-0200	SSB YLRL YL-OM Contest
10-12	1400-0600	CW QCWA QSO Party
10-11	2100-0100	CW RSGB 1.8MHz Contest
11	0000-0359	CW North American 'Sprint'
17-18	0000-2400	CW ARRL DX Contest
17-18	0000-2400	SSB YL-ISSB QSO Party
23-25	2200-1600	SSB CQ W W 160 Meter Contest
24-25	2 periods S	SB/CW North Carolina QSO Party
24-25	0600-1800	SSB REF
24-25	1300-1300	CW UBA
24-25	1400-0200	CW YLRL YL-OM Contest
24-25	1500-0900	CW RSGB 7MHz Contest
24-25	2200-0400	CW/SSB Co. QRP Club Winter QSO
25	2 periods	CW HSC Contest

Program

By David VE4DAR

February's topic is. The presenter is the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service

Although originally scheduled for last November (Fire Prevention Month), the messages are still relevant. What are the latest ways of preventing fire in your shack, home, cottage and vehicle? How can you survive the effects of smoke and heat if caught in a fire? Do we really need a family escape plan? Get some answers from the pros at the next WARC meeting, February 12, at Sturgeon Creek Collegiate beginning at 1930 hours.

Have you noticed how we are trying to keep the business portion of our meetings short to give everyone a 30-minute coffee break before the program so you can visit friends and meet some new ones?

March 12: Home Brew Night. Note: this has been advanced from April. Here's the opportunity for builders and experimenters to show their stuff. If you haven't been in your workshop doing some drilling, bending, twisting, tightening and soldering, get busy! You've only got 60 days left to create a winner. There will be some great prizes to compete for. Remember, this year Home Brew Night is in March.

Winnipeg ARES Report

by Jeff, VE4MBQ - Winnipeg EC

Our January meeting featured CAPT Heather Darrach and John Gowron from The Salvation Army (TSA). They provided a thorough overview of TSA Emergency Services and focused on how amateur radio could help their response in any future disasters in Manitoba - getting involved with TSA Emergency Response Vehicles would be a great opportunity for non-ARES mobility-limited amateurs to provide some public service. Equipment requirements would be a 2m mobile, mag-mount antenna, power cord with cigarette lighter plug. Anyone interested should register thru the WPGARES web-site :

<http://www.escape.ca/~wpgares/>

Or complete a ARES Emergency Volunteer Registration form (available at next WARC meeting) and forward it to MBQ.

The volunteer briefing for amateur operators involved with Festival du Voyager Sled Dog Races is TUE 06FEB, 1900h at WSCRC 598 StMarys Rd. The races are 10, 11FEB at Birds Hill Park.

Our February monthly meeting 1900h TUE 20FEB will feature Rick Lord VE4OV, topic will be Near Vertical Incidence Skywave (NVIS) propagation. This will be our last meeting at Sir Wm Stephenson Library 765 Keewatin for some time, future monthly meetings will likely be held at West Kildonan Library - monitor the MRS Net, read your Newscaster and check the WPGARES web-site in the week leading up to the March meeting.

There will be a WPGARES members -only familiarization at the City of Winnipeg Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) TUE 27FEB; 1900h surnames A-L, 2000h surnames M-Z. The EOC is located in the lower level of the Council Bldg 510 Main. Enter thru the 24hrs James Avenue entrance (down the ramp, north side of the Administration Bldg), ARES photo-ID is a must to get in!

There will be an ARES familiarization session at MHEOC TUE 13MARCH - further details in the next Newscaster.

REPORTABLE WINTER WEATHER

By Jeff, VE4MBQ EC Winnipeg ARES

The staff at PSPC would like CANWARN members who observe some particular WINTER WEATHER events to notify the office via the "usual" 1-800 number.

Non-CANWARN amateurs and members of the public can use 1-800-239-0484 or #HAIL (#4245) on MTS Mobility.

Please report observations of:

- ☼ Low Visibility
- ☼ Freezing Rain
- ☼ Freezing Drizzle
- ☼ Snowfall accumulations over 6 - 8 cm

Any other hazardous or potentially hazardous elements.



WWW.VE4.NET

Promoting the Spirit of Radio

Bob Hrabí

VE4ZAP

Sweepstakes 2000 – The Best Ever?

By Rob, VE4GV

Did you ever notice how the HF bands seem to explode with activity during certain early winter weekends? The period between September and March is prime contest time on the HF frequencies. What are contests? They are competitions that occur that allow stations both big and small to test the limits and skills of their operators. We compete against each other, against other clubs or just with ourselves (hoping to better last year's score). Contests can be short (like the 4 hour North American Sprint) or long (like the biggest of them all, the marathon 48 hr CQ Worldwide contest). They can involve a small local or national area (such as a State QSO party or RAC's Contests) or they can get the whole world participating as in the CQ Worldwide. How much or little you operate is up to you. Some serious contesters even assemble gear/antennas, computers at remote locations. They travel for thousands of miles and plan for years to be at just the right place for a contest. Stations can be logged using the latest computer hardware that is interfaced to your rig. On the other hand, they can also be worked using a QRP rig, a wire antenna, a pencil and a logbook. That's what's so great about it! It doesn't matter what kind of gear you have, your contact counts just as much as the next station's. The big guys need YOU! Once the competition starts, the rush is incredible. In some contests stations can be worked at a rate of 300 an hour or more! (That's a contact every five seconds!!) Wow! That's hot!

For the past 20 years or so I have been looking forward to November because of the ARRL's November Sweepstakes. It's my favorite! The ARRL Sweepstakes contest is unique. (The CW version takes place on the first weekend in November; the SSB or "Phone" version is on the third weekend.) This contest is actually derived from the earlier days of amateur radio where handling "traffic" (numbered messages) was an important part of the hobby. In order for messages to be accurately passed from one station to another (especially on CW), there had to be a mechanism to ensure that the entire message was copied correctly and accurately. This was called a "check" and it represented a number that counted all the words in the message. (Sort of like checksums that are included in today's data packets). That way the receiving station knew they had received the entire message. The ARRL Sweepstakes contest "exchange" is derived from that old formula. This is how it works. The message consists of five parts and looks like this:

Nr 436 A VE4GV 72 MB

What does this all mean? It's easy!! Here's the translation:

- ④ NR 436 is the contact number in my log. Nr = number
- ④ The letter A designates me as competing in a specific category or class. That way my score competes against stations that are similar to mine in certain respects: (Q=

QRP 5 w or less, A= Low Power (LP) 150 w or less, B= High Power (HP) > 150 W, M = Multiop, S = School sponsored stations and U = Unlimited (those are stations that use a packet "spotting network" to find rare stations.)

- ④ VE4GV is my call. "72" represents the year that I was licensed.
- ④ And finally, "MB" represents my RAC section, Manitoba.

There are currently 80 sections (also known as multipliers) in North America. (DX stations don't count. This is strictly a US/Canada contest) Other examples are (NNJ) Northern New Jersey, (WTX) West Texas, (SJV) San Joaquin Valley California, and (NLI) New York-Long Island. They are listed in QST, on the ARRL website and they also come as part of your contest logging software.

I may get this in return: Nr 86 B W1WEF 65 ME

I'm his QSO nr 86, he's running hi power, his callsign is W1WEF, licensed in 1965, located in Maine.

Your final score is calculated by multiplying the number of contacts (Qso points) by the number of sections that you work. Working all 80 sections (or "mults") in the Sweepstakes earns you the coveted "Clean Sweep"! It's up to you to find all 80 of the sections (although stations running the "assisted or unlimited – U class" can use packet spotting networks). Sweepstakes is also unique because unlike most other contests, (where you can work the same station on each amateur band) you can only work a station once during the entire contest, regardless of the bands you use. You really have to use your ears and find those elusive rare ones. Manitoba stations are rare and everyone in the contest needs at least one for a clean sweep. (You can even get special pins for working 100 stations, and if you're lucky enough to get the "sweep", a submitted log and ten bucks sent to the ARRL can earn you the prized "Clean Sweep" coffee mug.) As many as 3,000 stations or more participate in the Phone portion of the Sweepstakes contest.

In past years I have been quite fortunate. Our geographic location in the center of the continent is often a big drawback in international contests. But in Sweepstakes being in the center is a big advantage. So is being from a rare section. The great HF propagation we've been experiencing for the past few years will not last forever. Up here in the "higher" latitudes, (compared to the US) we have to take advantage of the propagation peaks of the 11-year solar cycle. I've been lucky enough to be the "A" (Low Power) Overall Champion on three previous occasions. (1992, 1996 and 1999) The addition of a 2-el 40 m beam (on top of my KT34 XA 6 el tribander) in the early 1990s has made a tremendous difference in my scores.

In Sweepstakes 2000, I am the defending Low Power (A Class) Champion and conditions at the peak of the solar

cycle are perfect. It was with great deal of excitement and anticipation that I fired up my FT1000D and computer at the start of the contest. Preparations are very important. Contesters are very wary of Murphy because he's known to strike at the worst possible times. I ensure that all connections are secure and RFI proof, the software is loaded and working, my rig and antennas are properly tuned and I'm ready. I check the logs of previous years' contests to plot band-changing strategy. Most importantly, I've also trained my family. They all know that Sweepstakes Phone weekend is when Daddy is unavailable unless the house is burning down. On the shack door there is a sign that says "Do Not Disturb" (unless you want to give me a qso!).

My strategy for Sweepstakes is simple. Stay on the highest frequency band that is open and continue to "CQ Contest" or announce that I am ready for a contact (QRZ?). Because of my relative rarity, stations will come to me as long as I have a good signal. This means good clean crisp audio (not too much processing!) and clear use of recognizable phonetics. With low power, you have to sound "loud" because it is easy for you to get covered up or "pushed off" a frequency by a station running higher power. Much of the skill in Sweepstakes involves learning how to "run stations" on a frequency, controlling the mad rush of stations that want to work you as quickly as possible (the "pileup") and making sure you copy the exchange accurately. Mistakes in sending your exchange or copying the other stations exchange can cost your score valuable QSO points. That's why although you want to be fast, you also have to be very accurate. (Some Sweepstakes CW contesters routinely make QSOs at 32-34 wpm for hours at a time!!)

Sweepstakes also involves strategy with regards to "when" to be on. The contest period is 30 hours total (2100 UTC Saturday to 0300 UTC Sunday) but you can only operate 24 of the 30 hours. You have to know when to take a break (half hour minimum at a time) and use those 6 "off" hours wisely. Contesting at high rates can be very fatiguing. Not only can your voice give out, you have to keyboard accurately when you are tired. You also have to know when to sleep. Sleeping through a good band opening can be disastrous for your score. There's even a whole strategy of what to eat or drink to keep your energy level at maximum. Alcohol and big meals are definitely counterproductive.

At 2100 UTC on Saturday, Sweepstakes Phone begins. It is said that the first ten hours of Sweepstakes make or break your score. It is not uncommon for a busy operator to remain seated during this entire ten-hour time, fingers glued to the keyboard or VFO knob, ears listening attentively for the next contact (sometimes even without a bathroom break!). "Rate" is everything. The faster you work them, the better your score. Once you have found a valuable clear frequency (and that can be very hard to find on a crowded band) you begin to "run" stations by calling "CQ

Sweepstakes". Other stations tune across the band and find you by S&P (known as "Search and Pounce"). They want to work you quickly so they can move to the next station up (or down) the band. The QRM can be atrocious!

I start on 10 M. My first hour is good, 135 stations in the log. (Because the exchanges are very long, Sweepstakes doesn't have the 300+ rates of some of the other contests.) 10 M starts to be less productive and I move to 15m. For some reason (propagation?) 15m is not as good as it should be. My rate dips and I consider moving to 20 m. This is what Sweepstakes is all about, knowing when to move frequencies or change bands to keep the best rate. Experience counts. My second hour is disappointing, 117 qsos. I have to do better. I decide to move to 20 m. Its wall-to-wall stations between 14200-14350! I finally squeeze into a frequency (14.287) that isn't too crowded. During the third hour, I have a fantastic 150 QSO/hr (my best ever!). I went to 20m just at the right time. Wow, this is great!

Over the next few hours I gradually move lower in frequency (from 20 m to 40m) as the sun sets and the higher bands fade. Not only do I have to watch the band frequencies, I have to be careful where I point my antennas so I take maximum advantage of propagation. I also have to watch out for the elusive Yukon Territory/NWT, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and Wyoming sections (sometimes hopping from band to band to search for them). There may be only one or two stations on from those sections during the whole weekend so they can be very difficult to find. Many a station has lamented that they missed the "sweep" for lack of one tough section.

Another fantastic thing about Sweepstakes is the contest community itself. Because there aren't too many active VE4s (Me, Derrick VE4VV, Kelly VE4XT, Ed VE4YU and a few others) I have a high call recognition factor. Many people who have worked me in years past stop by to give me a contact and to thank me for their Manitoba "multiplier". It's a lot of fun having people remember you from year to year. Although I can't chat with them during the contest (I'm much too busy), we often work each other in different contests, exchange after-contest E-mail or see each other at the Dayton Hamfest.

The contest community is also a very tight group. We even have our own ARRL publication, the semi-monthly NCJ (National Contest Journal). What unites us is the constant need to find and share ways to improve our scores, our stations and operating ability. Upgrades and experimentation is always happening, whether it is in logging software, antennas, equipment or just strategy. You can also find some of the most technically knowledgeable people in amateur radio in the contest community. Stations with questions about virtually any aspect of contesting can get instant expert advice by subscribing to one of the Internet Contest "Reflectors" such as "CQ-Contest". We all have something

to contribute, even if it is just another station's perspective on propagation or radio conditions. After all, the more stations I can hear, the more I can work and the better the contest! The more the merrier!

Contesters are also famous for Elmering. Some of the larger contest clubs have produced hundreds of contesters that, in turn, have spawned several generations of contesting stations. The contest community realizes that unless we can interest younger people to get their tickets and get on the air, there will be fewer and fewer stations to work as the years go by. Fortunately, younger people (especially teenage boys) love to compete. Once the contest bug hooks you, the Internet seems boring by comparison. No, we may not have the fancy graphics, but there is a certain excitement that comes with anticipating propagation, a great run of stations or not knowing who will work you (or you will work) during the next QSO. I suppose in some ways its like fishing. You never know when that big one will bite, but there are strategies that you can use to help you increase your odds. Learning about the gear, learning from the experience of others and developing these strategies is half the fun. If you chase DX, contesting offers the ability to work rare or exotic locations that may only be on for the period of the contest. It also gives you practice on how best to crack a pileup.

I've now been on for 9 straight hours from 3 pm to midnight. With almost 1100 Qsos in the log, I'm about 130 Qsos ahead of last year's pace. I'm pretty happy. I take one last scan of the bands and then its time to get some sleep. Five hours later I'm up and scanning the bands again. 40m is open, 20m hasn't opened yet and 10m skip is still too long for the US and Canada. I have a little time before my 6-hour off period is over so I shower, get some coffee in me and prepare for the final 14 hours.

Sunday is a tough day in Sweepstakes because by Sunday afternoon, you may have worked virtually all the stations in the contest that you can hear. I have my "Sweep" by Sunday morning so my job is now to find those stations that I haven't worked and to encourage other stations that are not in the contest to help me with a contact. This is particularly important on 10 m where US Novices are allowed to use SSB. Many are making some of their first ever SSB contacts and I need to be especially careful that I don't scare them away with a rapid-fire exchange. I slow down a bit and sometimes guide them through an explanation of the exchange. Not only does it give me points, it may turn a few of them on to contesting and give them an incentive to upgrade their tickets. Then they'll be able to join us on the other bands too. Its also very rewarding when you work a 12 year old who now thinks contesting is "really cool".

By Sunday afternoon, the rate drops but remains consistently in the 70/hr range. This is still very good and is an indication of how favorable propagation has been over

the last couple of days. This is when a "second radio" is a big advantage. I can call "CQ Contest from Manitoba" on one radio while listening to a different band on the second radio. (The key is to put one radio receive audio in each side of your headphones. It is definitely a cultivated skill and I'm still learning it.)

As the contest comes to a close, I detect some desperation in the voices of some stations calling CQ Sweepstakes. They need a section or two to complete their "Clean Sweep" and they haven't got much time left. Once in a while I hear "CQ Manitoba" and I call them. I really enjoy their reaction to me giving them that last multiplier. Most are jumping out of their chairs or are very excited to finally get the "Sweep". Scanning the bands also gives me a chance to check out my competition. I listen to some other "A Class" stations give their exchanges. It looks like I'm in the lead. K5ZD, Randy (one of the better B class contesters) says I have a great "A" score, the best he's heard. That's a very good sign. I'm re-energized for the finish.

0300 finally rolls around and I'm exhausted. My throat is sore. My eyes are red from staring at the monitor. My ears are ringing. I close the log off with a "raw" (unofficial) total of 1952 contacts and a clean sweep. I calculate my score, 312,480 pts. It appears to be a new all time record for Low Power (Class A) Sweepstakes!! The best ever! I need a good stretch, shave, shower and a good meal. My family barely recognizes me. I'm a mess. I'm tired, but it's a "good" tired. It's been a great Sweepstakes weekend.

I submit my log electronically (via E-mail) to ARRL Headquarters where it will be placed in a computer and checked against other log submissions. The computer removes Qsos with errors in them and calculates my Official score. The results will be published in QST magazine in May or June of next year. Over the next few hours my E-mailbox starts to swell with hundreds of reports of scores from other stations on the contest reflector. The "Soapbox" comments attached to these scores tell tales of triumph and disaster, elation and frustration, expectations fulfilled and denied, Sweeps made and missed. But they all end with the same thought... just wait until next year's SS.

With a bit of luck I'll have a new plaque to add to the others on my wall. That will be nice to see in about five years when the solar cycle is at its low, propagation is poor and I long for the "good old days" of Sweepstakes 2000.

Editors Ramblings
By Derek VE4HAY

Sorry no room - enjoy .

Toronto-born 'father of wireless communication,' Al Gross, dead at 82

PHOENIX (AP) - Al Gross, the Toronto-born inventor of the walkie-talkie and a father of wireless communication, once said he believed he was born 35 years too soon.

He died Dec. 21 in Sun City, Ariz., at age 82. When Gross, who was born in Toronto and grew up in Cleveland, demonstrated his prototype pager at a medical conference in 1956, it flopped. Doctors told him they didn't want to be bothered during their golf games. Decades later, it delighted him to see such wide use of cellular phones and pagers, a technological offshoot from his first devices.

He earned a degree in electrical engineering at Cleveland's Case School of Applied Science, now Case Western Reserve University.

Seeing the potential for walkie-talkies, the military recruited Gross into the Office of Strategic Services, the precursor of the CIA.

There, he developed a ground-to-air, battery-operated radio that could transmit up to 50 kilometres. The device is credited with saving lives during the Second World War.

After the war, he formed the Citizens Radio Corp. in Cleveland to produce two-way radios for the public. His success gave Gross the freedom and money to continue inventing.

In 1949 he devised the first wireless pager. That was followed in 1951 by his wireless telephone. In 1959 he began to work in the aerospace industry, contributing critical work for digital timing devices in Titan, Atlas and Minuteman missiles.

His contribution to pop culture came in the late 1940s, when Dick Tracy cartoonist Chester Gould visited the Gross workshop. Gould saw two items that sparked a brainstorm: a watch with a built-in beeper and a wireless microphone.

"Can I use this?" he asked the inventor, who agreed.

In 1948, the comic-strip detective made his debut as a crime fighter aided by a two-way wrist radio.

Gross's ideas, for which he held many patents, were so far advanced most expired before the world was ready for his inventions and he didn't make much money.

"I was born 35 years too soon," he once told the Arizona Republic newspaper.

"If I still had the patents on my inventions, Bill Gates would have to stand aside for me."

Keep you eye on the sky **By Derek, VE4HAY**

EME folks - Full month on February 7th. This will be when the Moon as close to the earth as it will get in 2001 a mere 357,000 Km's. Sorry about the short notice, but I bet VE4MA was ready.

Meteor Scatter folks - April 21st will be the peak of the Lyrid shower with about 1 shooting start every minute. August 11 & 12 the annuals Perseids meteor shower with up to 100 shooting stars an hour. And the granddaddy of them all the Leonids will beak on November 17th with rates as highs as 10,000 an hour. Now that should be able to produce some distinctive sounds on your QSO's. And finally the Geminid shower on Dec. 13th.

Eclipses - While not visible a total eclipse of the sun will happen on June 21 over Africa, and we will be in night mode at that time. So you can look for some possible grey area Dx that night. Also look at December 14th for another solar eclipse over South America which will produce about 20% coverage for us. So once again you should be able to work so grey area DX. And finally on the 30th just before the RAC winter contest will be a lunar eclipse which will make the ionosphere almost free of solar radiation and the lunar surface should be better for bouncing signals off as well for these EME folks.

All in all, 2001 will be another good year for working the skies. Good luck.



Two of the CW instructors at VE4WSC
Bruce, VE4GR & Tony, VE4AO



VE4EWN accepts his Worked All Winnipeg award from
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