



Feedline

Virtual ZOOM Meeting 7pm Thursday, Jan.14th. Contact webmaster@nparc.ca

President's Message

I trust everyone had a very good holiday and are looking forward to a better 2021. Unfortunately, we start off this new year with sad news about the passing of Denis Grantham, VE3KVE. Denis was a big contributor to the work of the club and to ARES. We have a memorial article about Denis in the month's edition. He will be immensely missed.

We are going to continue to conduct our monthly meetings via Zoom for a few more months. I am looking forward to the day we can all meet in person again. Having said that, we are going to start holding a virtual morning coffee meet using Zoom. We will meet the first and third Tuesday at 9 AM. No agendas or directed topics. We want it to be much like the Tuesday coffee meets we were having at Seaway Mall. The only stipulation is that you must wear pants! Everyone should have gotten the invite for the first meeting. If you didn't and are interested, please let the webmaster know at webmaster@nparc.ca.

Our guest speaker at this month's meeting will be Phil McBride, VA3QR, RAC Ontario South Region Director. Phil will present an update on RAC activities and information about what is happening with amateur radio in Canada. Our February speaker will be Barry Lisoweski, VE3ISX. Barry is the ONTARS manager and has expertise in remote operations. Do not miss these two great speakers. We are still looking for a speaker for March. I am hoping by April that we can have an in person, out of doors, meeting.

Winter Field Day is coming up. See the article about Winter Field Day and the changes to the rules. We are planning on conducting WFD much like we did back in the summer for ARRL Field Day and submit a NPARC aggregate score.

The Executive is beginning the process of defining our goals and objectives. Aside from the obvious goals of increasing membership and engaging youth, where do you want to see NPARC in three years? What would you like NPARC to do as a club? Please share your thoughts and ideas with the Executive. You can email me or the executive as a whole at executive@nparc.ca.

Lastly, I want to congratulate our 2020-21 Jim Thompson Ham of the Year, Denis Cahill VA3ONO. Denis has been a real go getter for the club especially this year. Our primary means of communicating all the NPARC activities is via the Feedline. Denis works tirelessly every month putting this together. He also keeps in touch with many of our shut-in's which is so important in these trying times. Let's give a big hand and a toast to Denis and his cameras!! [Steve Riddle, VA3FLF, President](mailto:Steve.Riddle@nparc.ca)

SK Denis Grantham VE3KVE

Denis was a member of NPARC but for how long? To some of us it seems as though he was part of the shack.

According to the Ministry of Innovation, Science and Economic records Denis and VE3KVE joined the hobby in Canada during the 1970's. It is not know if he was a licensed ham in his native England.

We know from his frequent admonishment “my other club did it ...” as we were trying to solve a particular problem he was a member of the Burlington (Ontario) Amateur Radio Club.

A fellow BARC member has indicated that he and Denis had a “commute net” in the 1980s. And he presented his Shack in the Box to both a BARC and the NPARC tech night in 2019. Denis self designed an amateur radio platform on his E-Bike in 2018 according to the Niagara Ares newsletter. He became particularly interested in the new lithium iron phosphate battery revolution and incorporated them into his ‘Go-Box’ designs.



While a member of NPARC, Denis was active at general meetings, tech nights, field day, Niagara ARES and sold tickets and took photographs at our annual Big Event flea market. He volunteered to provided radio support to local organizations, specifically in Niagara Falls where he lived. For many years Denis was liaison between the City of Niagara Falls event coordinator and NPARC. With Denis leading, we supported their Canada Day and Santa Claus parades.

In recent years his heath declined and he was battling different ailments that began to rack his body but not his mind. When final arrangements are released we will post them on the club web site.

Today he leaves a hole in our hearts and a bit of static in the ionosphere.

73 OM - David Jarman VE3RNF

[NPARC General Meeting Minutes October 8, 2020](#)

Held via Zoom. Meeting called to order at 7:08 pm. 21 in attendance

A moment of silence was observed for SK John Leslie.

We now stand at 50 members

New Ham Academy

To be held virtually in January. Please email Steve Riddle VA3FLF if interested in volunteering to teach

Future Events

We are now members of the Contest Club of Ontario as VE3VM. Our goal is to have a club station, possibly at Black Creek

RAC Winter Contest is December 19th. There is a new rookie category for hams who have been licensed for less than two years.

Our Spring Hamfest will be on May 15th, 2021 at the Niagara Regional Exhibition Grounds. We need someone who is willing to coordinate the event

Presentation

Al Boyd, VE3AJB, from Manitoulin Island, gave a talk about Hot Spots—what they are and how they are used in ham radio. A question-and-answer period followed.

Minutes of the last meeting were approved as printed in the Feedline

Treasurer's Report was accepted as read

Ham of the Year

A motion was brought forth that Denis Cahill be presented with the 2020 Jim Thompson Ham of the Year Award. This was accepted unanimously.

Steve VA3FLF asked us to think about where we would like NPARC to be within the next two to three years. The membership is invited to email Steve with any thoughts as to our future goals and objectives.

Membership Committee

Active, but with nothing new to report

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm

[April Lewis VE3BHG](#) Secretary

GUEST SPEAKER ALLAN BOYD VE3AJB HISTORY AND EVERYDAY USE OF HOTSPOTS

Hotspot Types
The DV Mega

- *As the need was there hams did what they do best they experimented and designed hotspots one of the first being the DV Mega. The device ran on a Raspberry Pi 2 or 3 with a DV Mega board (hat) which mated with the Pi's "GPIO" pins.*
- *A new software was designed called Pi-Star*
- *Supports D-Star, plus DMR, P-25, System Fusion, and NXDN. Constantly updating with firmware updates.*
- *Good internet configurations using either plug in ethernet or WIFI.*
- *One of the fastest Pi-based systems since the computer is fast.*
- *Widely used today and very popular*

(A photograph of the DV Mega board, a Raspberry Pi with a black antenna, is shown in the center of the slide.)

Steve Riddle, VA3FLF, President, Henry Jarzyna, VA3OV, Vice President

John Lorenc, VA3WM, Treasurer, April Lewis, VE3BHG, Secretary.

VE3NRS Club Net, Wed., 8pm 147.240MHz, + 107.2 Tone.

Membership information available at nparc.ca

JIM THOMPSON HAM OF THE YEAR AWARD 2020

This club recognition is not given for one event nor just last years activities. Denis Cahill, VA3ONO, has earned our recognition for being an outstanding, active club member throughout the eight years of his membership.

To local area residents his name is synonymous with the arrival, on the doorstep, of the daily St. Catharines Standard. His 44-year-year career as a photojournalist for that journal has made his name well known in Niagara.

Like many of us he came to amateur radio later in life. His QRZ page admits he began as a teen, understood the theory but not the code. It was at the 2009 Big Event he was spotted by life member, Dave Digweed, VE3FOI, also a fellow student back in the 1960's. Dave, pointed the way to the club table and advised him that Oscar Bordenave, (SK) VE3POI, Kenwood TS-140S would be a suitable first radio. Still busy with freelance photo assignments it wasn't until March 2012 he was licensed with the call he requested, VA3ONO.



Once in, the bug bit and there has not been a facet of club activity where he has not been active. Most notably as editor of the club's newsletter, Feedline, since September 2018.

At weekend events like Field Day, Denis has managed to be there to take photographs. And fortunately for the rest of us he often collected and delivered the Saturday evening meal to whatever remote field we chose to operate from.

He attributes John Hunt, VE3JWH and later Gary Clifford, VE3DZP with the help he needed to get on the air. He also enjoys keeping in touch with several of NPARC's senior citizens. He has not replaced his camera for a microphone and is still active as a portrait and event photographer in Niagara.

He is married to Bridget and they raised three children, all living only miles from the family home in St. Catharines. Denis is proud that he is the third generation of his family to be born in St. Catharines. That has extended to five generations with his children and grandchildren.

Operating a small home based station that Denis takes portable, his log contains over 4600 QSO's. VA3ONO may be found on the radio spectrum from VHF to 40 metres, QRP to 100 watts, on phone and now FT8.

by David Jarman VE3RNF - First Jim Thompson Ham of the Year recipient.



NPARC will be offering a Virtual New Ham Academy via Zoom on Saturday, January 16th. The class is primarily targeted to our newest group of Basic Class Graduates. We are also inviting anyone that has been licensed for less than three years to also join in. If any one would like to sit in on the instruction, whether you are a new ham or a veteran, feel welcome to sign up. Some but not all of the topics include:

- Setting up a New Station and Troubleshooting
- Basic Antenna Design
- VHF and UHF Operations
- Introduction to Digital Ops

Classes will start via Zoom at 0915 local and run until approximately 1600. We will take a short lunch break but will leave the meeting running.

If you wish to join the class please send an email to webmaster@nparc.ca for your Zoom invite. Please request no later than Thursday, January 14th.

The New Hams from the Fall Class do not have to request to attend, we will send you the invite.

RAC Canada Winter Contest



Club member Doug Frame, VE3JDF, enjoying the 2020 RAC Canada Winter Contest from his Pt. Colborne QTH Dec. 19th. A new 'Rookie' subcategory was added this year by RAC however Doug didn't qualify.

NIAGARA ARES NEWS

Welcome 2021. A new year full of expectations. Public services activities are at a stand still. Emergency Managers at all municipal levels are overwhelmed with the runaway Covid-19. We will continue to hold ZOOM meetings to share information and offer ongoing ARES training. The Niagara ARES weekly Monday night on VE3RAF 145.190MHz is well attended from within the region and beyond. We will continue to switch repeaters, using the UHF unit VA3RFM on 442.250MHz, offset +5MHz, T107.2Hz.

We have presently have a Winlink Packet Gateway in St-Catharines on 145.030MHz VA3OV-10 linked with a digipeater VE3RFM on 145.030MHz. A second Gateway, this one is a VARA-FM v.4.0.1 located in Fonthill on 145.090MHz. We offer wide area coverage to the Niagara Region and beyond. Any licensed amateur radio amateur can use the Winlink system to pass written messages over RF using appropriate equipment.

Niagara ARES are pioneering in Canada, the adoption of VARA-FM and HF for use in emergency communications. We see an emergence of ARES Group (GTA) adopting Winlink as their main mode of emergency communication.

Check the aresniagara.ca web site calendar of events for current information. Zoom meeting, January 16, 2021 at 1900.

Check your email for an invitation prior to the meeting to prevent any issues.

If you have any questions regarding the Niagara ARES activities you can contact me at the address below. 73 Be prepared. Stay safe.

Henry Jarzyna VA3OV EC, CEC Niagara ARES va3ov@bell.net 289-407-4499

GET READY FOR THE WINTER FIELD DAY CONTEST



The Winter Field Day Association contest is fast approaching. WFD has amended the rules this year to accommodate clubs and groups that are unable to gather due to COVID related restrictions. That being said, the rules will be similar to the ARRL summer Field Day in that clubs can accumulate an aggregate score from members.

Each participant will conduct their own FD operation at a location of their choice and be responsible for their own station and scoring. When each operator submits their score need to indicate in the CLUB/Group Field “**Niagara Peninsula ARC.**” It is critical that everyone indicates the club exactly as indicated. NPARC will receive an aggregate score of the sum of all members participating.

We had a good time last summer and ran a talk-in net so members could communicate during the contest. WFD is a little different in that classifications are indoor, outdoor or home. Indoor is a location not your own QTH, outdoor can be any outside location at least 30 feet away from your shack and not using your previously installed antennas. I am thinking about my closed in gazebo, QRP with FT-817 and using my end fed antenna. That would count as outdoor. (Do I sound Canadian yet?)

If you participate and submit your log as indicated above, you will be eligible for a \$150 gift certificate from Radioworld. As before it will be a random draw but you must have added Niagara Peninsula ARC on the correct spot when submitting your WFD contest log to qualify.

If you want to participate look at the below links for the WFD website and rules. WFD doesn't have an automated upload site like ARRL. NPARC owns a copyright for N3FJP software which I highly recommend to use for logging. It will make all the uploading much easier. Please let Henry or myself know if you want to participate. va3ov@bell.net or president@nparc.ca.

I will schedule a Zoom WFD Meeting sometime the last week of January before WFD; Tentatively January 26th.

<https://www.winterfieldday.com/>

Rules: https://a2a53e2b-2285-4083-9cff-c99fe5ba1658.filesusr.com/ugd/1c7085_2445ed4b22f74e048fe9bd41c8dba103.pdf

Steve VA3FLF

Contesting Tips & Tricks: The Operating Position - by Kevin Lemon VE3RRH

You don't have to be good, You just have to be willing.

There are 2 types of contest methods:

- 1) The Run Station,
 - 2) The run station is a contest station that parks on a frequency and tries not to move for the duration of the contest. They are identified by the chant
 - 3) " CQ Contest CQ Contest VE3RRH Contest"
 - 4) and the comment QRZ after each QSO. A good Run station will identify after every contact, others will identify after a varying number of contacts.
 - 5) This station will normally have a large number of people calling them and they will be surrounded by a cacophony of signals, they are also the one we will generally be looking for.
 - 6) It takes practice and patience to be a run station as you need the ability and skill to control a wild mess of stations all calling you at the same time.
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- 1) The Search and Pounce, or Run and Gun Station
 - 2) This station is what most of us will be, when first starting out, I still run and gun in most contests, it is the easiest method for making contacts. We will search for the Run stations, the trick is how to break through the mess and make the contacts.

But First: Getting ready to contest:

All the big contests, Field Day, CQ World Wide DX, ARRL International DX, CQ WPX Contest and many others will run for 48 hours straight, Generally from Friday night until Sunday night.

Some other contest will run for 24 hours, and others for shorter periods of time,.

The bottom line then is your station must be set up with comfort in mind.

You WILL need a comfortable chair, I suggest a good fitting office chair that has wheels and the ability to change heights as well as an adjustable back. Don't go cheap your going to spend a lot of time in that chair. You could use an old kitchen chair, but you won't last long in a contest.

You should be able to sit in your chair with your feet flat on the floor, your thighs straight out and no pressure on the bottom of the thighs, you should be sitting reasonably upright with good support on your back, arm rests are ok but not especially needed, arm rests that can be raised or lowered are good because you can slide them under the table to get closer to the radios, if the armrest won't go under the operating surface then remove them. A good test for your chair setup is to sit and read a book for an hour or 2, maybe even read the manual for the radio, if your still comfortable after that you should be ok for a contest,.

The radio table/bench should be high enough that you can comfortably rest your forearms on the top without hunching over, Hunching over your table will destroy your back in a couple of hours and you will regret it for days after.

I prefer a table top that is at least 30" deep, I have used kitchen tables, and standard office desks.

For my current radio shack I built my radio bench to fit my room.

You can also build a really simple and useful table using 2 two drawer filing cabinets and a 5/8 or 3/4 piece of MDF for a wood top. I built my current benches like that, I have 2 two drawer cabinets under a sheet of 3/4" thick MDF that is 6 ft wide by 30" deep. I coated the top with a couple coats of Varathane to seal the surface to waterproof the wood and harden the surface. It also eliminates the dust.

Ok so to answer a common question, Why 30" deep, simple, 24" brings the radios too close to the front edge, and 48" pushes them too far back. 30" with the radios set all the way to the back gives me enough room to place the computer keyboard and mouse on the table in front of the radios, and still be able to rest my arms on the table as well. I rest my arm on the table and can comfortably spin the VFO on the radio for hours. My arms, neck and back do not get tired with this setup. The room at the front of the desk allows for note pads, and a place for the coffee cup.

Computer Setup:

You will need a computer, a computer will give you all kinds of useful programs and aids for Contesting, DXing and Chatting (Rag Chewing). You will also want to keep a record of your contacts, this is called logging, and while a paper log may seem simpler, a computer log will be much more useful after the first 100 or so contacts, and easier to store. Check out N3FJP.com.

First off, you do not need a Super Speed 16 core 64 gig computer with a gazillion gig of ram and a forty terabyte hard drive.

I use a Dell small footprint quad core, 2.7 gig Intel I5 computer with 8 gig of ram and a 240 gig hard drive, I paid \$70 for it used. I have a 27" Samsung monitor on it and a wireless mouse and keyboard.

It runs HRD, N3FJP, Winlink, Vara, Open Office, plays videos, and goes on the internet.

I have yet to find anything I can't do with it and it is fast enough. Since it is not loaded down with bloatware it boots up fast enough to keep me happy even with the antivirus, malware protection and sigh, windows 10.

The Dell also has 10 usb ports, 8 on the back and 2 on the front, and I use them all, this is the one thing to look for in your computer, its amazing how many USB ports you will use in your station, for externals like signal link sound card, and computer control of your radios.

Monitor Location:

My monitor sits on a shelf at eye level, just above my radio, I can look down at the radio and up directly at the monitor. Do not have the monitor above your natural eye level when sitting, you will hurt your neck and shoulders,

If you put the monitor on the table top, put it directly in front of you and put the radio off to the side of the monitor in comfortable arms reach. In contesting or any general operating you will be watching the monitor more than the radio. You don't need to watch the radio while turning the VFO but you will need to watch the monitor while entering information.

Laptops:

Of course you can use a laptop, I use them on outings, remote ops, and in my trailer.

Again you don't need a meg machine, most of my laptops are older dual core, or quad core machines with 4 – 8 gig of ram and a solid state hard drive, a 240 gig SS drive is around \$45 at Canada Computers and will increase the laptops speed and extend the battery life, a fast simple and cheap way to upgrade your laptop. Again put the laptop directly in front of you and the radio to the side.

Tip:

Consider putting the radio on the side of your off hand, ie. To the left if your a righty, to the right if your a lefty. Why? Because your off hand can tune the radio while your writing hand can type and write notes on the note pad. My Elmer taught me that when doing CW, I use my off hand for the key, leaving my right hand to take notes.

Lighting:

Now I like to work in a darkened room, I kill all the lights and I have a light over the operating position, I use LED lights in Natural or Sunlight colours. Now Sunlight colour is rather blue and may be disconcerting in the beginning but I find it to be easier on the eyes, causing less glare and creating a sharper clearer view of the radio, keyboard and monitor. I don't have a dimmer on my lights but that might be a cool option as well, as long as it doesn't generate and RF Noise.

Hearing: Speakers / Headphones

When I contest I use headphones, I have a set of Heil Pro Set Elite, however you do not have to have them to contest. I like the Heils because they are comfortable, adjustable, fold up into a small package when not being used, and have a great microphone built into the headset. The Pro Elite has a switch which changes the sound in the speakers to appear to be on the outside of your head or in the middle of your head, sounds weird but it has the advantage of changing your hearing perception and the ability to discern the signal your trying to dig out of a noisy background, they call it spatial widening. The one thing I find disappointing in the Pro Elite is the frequency range, the headset has too many high notes for my liking. In a contest or any HF operation you will hear a lot of high pitched white noise, a good headset in my opinion should cut out as much of the noise as possible, the Heil headset allows way too much of that white noise, it's frequency response is 10 Hz to 22kHz, I personally think it could be much lower, like 15 kHz.

I also use a set of old Radio Shack Nova Pro headsets Their frequency response is much lower and they reduce the hiss a lot, they do not have a boom mic though. That being said I use them with my Yaesu desk microphone.

Trick: when using headphones, try using soft ear plugs for noise dampening, it cuts the white noise down and protects your hearing at the same time, I use them quite a lot. Also don't crank the volume up with headphones, you can exceed the safe limits for hearing loss quite easily.

Concerning speakers, I have used them during contests, especially if some one else is in the shack with me, however my standard operating condition is headphones. The signals are easier to decipher, I don't have to deal with background noise, ie; dog barking, family talking and I don't fill the house with the noise of the contest, it's bad enough they have to listen to me yelling at the radio. By the way, with a boom mic you don't have to yell. You shouldn't yell at the desk mic, or any mic for that matter.

This is a good start on a basic station, when setting up things think about how you are going to operate, experiment with layouts, trial and error. The things I have shared here are from my own experiences over the last 29 years of operating, I run a station now with multiple radios, and computers but the above information still holds true today.

SK Stephen Tobe, VE3XO, Niagara-on-the-Lake

Retired Professor Emeritus Stephen Tobe, 76, VE3XO, world traveller and world-renowned researcher in arthropod endocrinology at the University of Toronto, passed Dec. 31st. According to Doug, VE3MV, he had short battle with pancreatic cancer. Besides travelling the world Steve's had keen interest in amateur radio. Over the years achieved Honour Roll standing for mixed, phone and RTTY as well as five band WAZ. His latest interest has been the new digital modes. A celebration of his life will be held post Covid.



SK Denis Grantham VE3KVE at NPARC Events



OVER TO ME

After it was announced that I was receiving the Jim Thompson Ham of the Year award, President Steve, emailed that my Amateur Radio history is a bit of a mystery.

As Joe Biden often says, "Here's the deal!"

I got interested in shortwave radio at the young age of seven. Our family drove to Virginia Beach in the 1950's. My dad took a Philco table radio along for the ride. At the motel near the ocean I pulled out a cloth covered antenna wire coiled up in the back of the radio and the rest was magic. I remember hearing fishing boat captains, the marine operator and even some police calls on the tube radio that most likely tuned past the broadcast band to 3MHz.

I was young when my father took me to meet his friend Bruce West and he was a ham. During WWII he ferried Canadian built bombers to Great Britain. He showed me his shack and made musical dits and dahs using his mouth. I've never been able to find much about him on the internet.

The real awaking came when I went to a summer camp on Lake Simcoe. I was DX'ing AM stations after lights-out with a transistor portable hidden under my pillow. We slept three to a tent and I could see the stars when I lifted the tent flap. The campers were taught swimming, canoeing, sailing, woodworking and how to develop black and white film. Knowing this was helpful getting a weekend job in our local newspaper darkroom, a few years later. The photography instructor also was a Heathkit builder. Something I never heard of. Soon I was sending for parts catalogues and ordered the Heathkit AR-3 short-wave tube radio.

At 14 I boarded an old ocean going ship being converted into a laker at Port Weller Dry Dock. Seeing the radio room on this ship that sailed the world's oceans was another pivotal moment.

It was around then I signed up for the NPARC course taught by Phil Pitman, VE3DQK. One of my fellow students was life member Dave Digweed, VE3FOI. Dave and the others zoomed ahead with the morse requirement. I was understanding the theory but after a couple of weeks said goodbye to the cookies and milk breaks and left the class.

I kept a basic interest in ham radio but never thought of joining the hobby until I took early retirement from The Standard in 2009. That February I attended the Big Event flea market. It was there Dave Digweed spotted me and pointed me to Oscar Bordenave, VE3POI (SK) Kenwood TS-140S radio. It became my first ham radio even though it took me three more years before I studied and passed the basic with honours exam.

I could go on and on with more radio related stories. Like having a Bell two-way telephone in my car in 1967. It was installed by Niagara Mobile Radio. Howard Cowling, VE3WT (SK) and his employee Tom Vince, VE3HM (SK) were both long time NPARC members.

OVER TO ME Part Two.



Made in England parts removed from the radio room of a Glasgow built T2 type tanker being converted at Port Weller Dry Dock in 1960. The ocean going vessel, MV Llandaff's was cut apart and a new forebody was added to her aft engine room. Because she was salt water ship, she had a large radio room behind the ship's bridge. The tube is a Z 77 pentode, used in many applications during the 1940's and 50's, including in radar. I believe M.W.T. stands for Marconi Wireless Telegraphy. In the foreground is my 1969 to 1975 licence to operate a VHF radio phone installed in my car. The fee was \$7.50 for five years. The transceiver installed by Howard Cowling's radio shop for Bell Telephone was a British made, single channel, PYE tube radio. It was the same compact PYE radio, I was told, installed on OPP police motorcycle for many years.

Denis Cahill VA3ONO - Feedline editor