



September 2026 Feedline



Welcome back to a brand-new season with the Niagara Peninsula Amateur Radio Club!

As we slide out of the summer heat and into crisp autumn air, September marks the official restart of our club meetings, regular nets, and technical projects. Whether you spent the summer chasing DX from a lawn chair, tweaking outdoor antenna setups, or simply taking a breather from the shack, it is time to spin the dial back to local club activity.

What's Ahead This Fall

Monthly Meetings Have Resumed: We kicked off our regular meeting schedule this month. Join us to reconnect with fellow operators, share summer shack upgrades, and hear updates on upcoming club initiatives at our new location.

Fall Contests & Field Events: Autumn brings fantastic HF propagation and a stacked calendar of operating events. Keep an eye out for upcoming group operating opportunities and public service events.

A vibrant club relies on the energy and ideas of its members. If you have a project you've been working on, a topic you'd like to present, or an idea for a club outing, bring it to the next meeting or drop a line to a member of the executive team.

Thank you for reading this issue of *The Feedline*. Dust off your microphone, fire up the rig, and let's make the 2026–2027 season one of our best yet. See you on the air or at the monthly meetings!

This newsletter thrives on your participation.
Grab a cold drink, fire up the rig, and enjoy the read. See you on the air!

MESSAGE FROM
THE PRESIDENT

A new place and a new beginning...

It's that time of year again to start off a great year of Amateur Radio here at NPARC. I hope everyone had a great summer. Now that fall is approaching, it is time for us to get together as a group of dedicated amateur radio operators for another club year.

We have lots to talk about, whether it be our contesting activities, The Big Event, field days both winter and summer, last years and next years, as well as other dates during our upcoming year, Christmas dinner, and our deployments at special events in the community.

We have never been in such great shape, but challenges will arise, so we need to be diligent with our funds and what we do with them to get the maximum use out of what we have.

We have also had Silent Key donations over the summer and have a surplus of equipment to offer up for modest donations to any club member that might be interested in the equipment. I will have some of this equipment at our monthly meeting on Wednesday, September 09, 2026 at 7:00 pm, at our new meeting place in the Meridian Community Centre, 100 Meridian Way, Fonthill, L3E 0X1.

As President for 2026-2027 club year it was my privilege to personally host our first meeting in our new location. Every month our meeting will be held in the Dr. Gary and Mall Accursi community room and please feel free to use the elevator to get to the second floor.

It was great to see you there for the start of a new club year that promises to be an exciting adventure with Amateur Radio in its many forms.

73s, Paul VE3WRP

Bike the Benchlands 2026

Bike the Benchlands, or BTB as it is locally known, held the last weekend in August, is an annual fund raiser event for the Rotary and other charitable organizations operating out of the Beamsville area.



The event consists of three routes, 50, 75 and 100 km long along the lower and upper parts of the Niagara escarpment around Beamsville. For a few years now, amateur radio operators have served as “communications and security” along various portions of the route, and generally provide the course closing car for each of the routes.

This year, Dale, VE3LFR’s truck served as the “emergency” response vehicle equipped with various bike repair facilities and a EMS volunteer, so we were ready for any emergency.

NPARC CCS (Community Communications Services) provided three radio equipped vehicles for course closing, and two for “on the spot” reporting from designated safety locations.

Thanks to Paul, VE3WRP, Lise, VE3WLI, David, VA3DPG, Nancy, VA3NWK, Jack, VE3ZPW, Geddie VE3CJX (who maintained the communication records and periodically plotted where each vehicle was) and Glenn VE3NDW (who acted as net control) and, of course, Dale VE3LFR.

Here are a couple of pictures showing action along the route, and the above mentioned enjoying lunch at the finish of the event.

We are looking forward to doing it again next year, hopefully with more NPARC communication volunteers. You will enjoy a good day.

73's Glenn VE3NDW





Our NPARC Services Net Designation

There still seems to be some confusion with regards to the proper nomenclature of our communication services, so I will try a short explanation.

The term ARES (amateur radio emergency services) previously used has been dropped by both Radio Amateurs Canada (RAC) and the US Amateur Radio Relay League (ARRL) to remove the "Amateur" designation a few years ago now. RAC now uses the term ACS (Auxiliary Communication Services) for activities related to operations under the Ontario Core.

RAC is no longer responsible for operations with local services such as Man a Mile, the Santa Parade, Bike the Benchlands, etc.

This is now the responsibility of the local clubs, and the local clubs are responsible for applicable training, etc. The term ACS and the logo are registered trade marks of RAC and cannot be used by the local clubs.

The suggested terminology for such local services is now Community Communication Services, or CCS for short. So, our activities with local events are now known as the NPARC CCS or Niagara Peninsula Amateur Radio Club Community Communications Services.

The old ARES Monday night net held on RAF is now known as the Community Communication Services net. I encourage you to join into the net when possible.

It is also worth noting that previous CERT AUX COMM training and services are NOT related to NPARC, although many members of CERT ACS were/are also members of NPARC.

Glenn Holden, NPARC CCS Chair.

THE UNPREDICTABLE MAGIC BAND - SIX METERS!

Last June and July 2026, I was determined to make some contacts using my two element, 6 meter Buddipole yagi. You may know that William 'Budd' Drummond designed one of the first multi-band, portable antenna systems for amateurs called the Buddipole. I ordered the kit, without the tripod, in 2010. I've talked to Budd several times over the air. He says, WHISKEY THREE FREDDY FREDDY, for his callsign. And I saw his son Chris at their booth at HamCation in Orlando Florida, a few years ago. It was their I purchased a small bag of extra parts to built their small, lightweight 6 meter beam.

If you haven't been on the 'Magic Band', you are missing one of amateur radio's unique experiences. People make contacts, sometimes brief, with power levels from milliwatts to the legal limit. In fact I made a QSO years ago with a Florida station from my home in St. Catharines using 5 watts and rubber ducky antenna right after a nearby station signed using 100 watts and a rooftop antenna.

My setup last summer was a FT-897D on a patio table, a 12V 50Ah LiFePO4 battery being charged by a 120W folding, solar panel, running 80 watts on phone. On June 13th the probation was more south-west. South Dakota, Nebraska, Wisconsin and Iowa. On July 14th and 17th, a more traditional north, south probation was the norm. From the Alabama coast, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Kansas, with a couple of Illinois, for good measure.

I use one of my heavy-duty Manfrotto light stands that gets the beam up 10 feet in the air. Three small canvas bags filled with rock dust keep the antenna stabile. I manually rotate the antenna to capture the loudest signal when the band lights up. And that can happen when you least expect it. Sometimes staying open well after sunset. It all depends on either the tropo ducting or the sporadic E skip layer.

I tune the four whips to the SSB calling frequency 50.125MHz. But changing the driven element and the reflector whip lengths you can easily move to the CW, FT8 or FM portion of the band. I use strings cut to the correct length so the whips can be quickly extended to the proper length for the lowest SWR.

No matter what antenna you use get on the magic band. There may be an opportunity this December. Watching your band scope for FT8 signals at 50.313 MHz can often predict a full opening.

Denis VA3ONO



Safe Mobile Operations

Operating mobile is one of the distinct thrills of amateur radio—whether checking into the Monday night ACS net on VE3RAF while commuting or tracking local weather movements. However, operating a station on wheels presents physical, electrical, and legal safety hazards that demand proper planning.

The Golden Rule: eyes on the road, hands on the wheel

distracted driving laws mean mobile operators must be extra vigilant. Under Ontario's *Highway Traffic Act*, emergency services and licensed radio operators often navigate specific exemptions, but no exemption protects against distracted driving charges if an operator loses focus.

Set frequencies before shifting into drive: Pre-program your memory channels for local repeaters—such as VE3NRS (147.240 MHz), VE3WCD (147.300 MHz), and VE3RNR (443.175 MHz).

Use hands-free solutions: Mount a push-to-talk (PTT) switch on the steering wheel or gear shift, and position a directional gooseneck microphone so you can talk without holding a mic.

Eyes-free operation: Keep key functions (volume, squelch, channel memory) accessible by muscle memory so your eyes remain on traffic.

Equipment mounting & cabin safety

In a collision or hard-braking scenario, a loose 3-pound radio rig becomes a dangerous projectile.

Secure bracket mounting: Never rely on double-sided tape or hook-and-loop fasteners for transceiver bodies. Bolt mounting brackets directly to structural floorboards or dedicated console rails.

Airbag clearance: Ensure neither the radio head, microphone cord, nor antenna cabling crosses front or side curtain airbag deployment zones.

Microphone retention: Use a magnetic mount or positive-locking clip for your hand mic so it does not drop into the footwell under hard braking.

Power, wiring, and RF considerations

A clean mobile setup protects both your vehicle's electrical system and your body.

Focus Area	Best Practice	Risk Avoided
Power Cabling	Run fused lines (both positive and negative) directly to the battery.	Prevents main harness overload and ground loops.
Grommets	Pass wiring through firewall grommets; never pinch under doors or hood edges.	Avoids insulation wear, short circuits, and vehicle fires.
RF Exposure	Mount antennas centrally on the roof sheet metal rather than lip-mounted on doors right next to passengers.	Reduces cabin RF exposure and provides a balanced ground plane.

Operating while pulled over

If a QSO demands your full attention—such as logging net check-ins, taking detailed notes, or configuring digital modes—pull safely off the roadway. Shift into park, turn on your hazard lights if near traffic, and complete the exchange while stationary.

Staying safe on the road keeps our hobby respected and keeps everyone safe.

Drive Safely ! Tony, VE3ZAV





Tony, VE3ZAV

Coast to Coast: September 2026 Canadian Amateur Radio News Brief

As autumn approaches, the Canadian amateur radio landscape remains active with regulatory developments, training opportunities, and national operational updates. Here is a roundup of the latest news across the country.

Regulatory & Policy Watch: ISED Antenna Tower Policy

Canadian operators and local clubs are keeping a close eye on Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED). ISED's proposed updates regarding antenna tower policies and local consultation frameworks continue to draw active participation from Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC) to ensure the interests of amateur radio operators remain well-represented.

RAC Fall 2026 Training Courses Open

For those looking to earn their credentials or upgrade privileges before winter sets in, RAC's national online training programs kick off later this month:

Basic Qualification Course: Running twice weekly (Thursday evenings and Sunday afternoons) starting **September 27**, this course prepares new candidates for the ISED Basic Qualification exam.

Advanced Qualification Course: Tailored for operators wanting higher power privileges, repeater administration, or club station trusteeship. Classes offer flexible scheduling options starting **September 27** (Sunday afternoons) and **September 28** (Monday evenings).

Publications & Media

September-October 2026 *The Canadian Amateur* (eTCA): The digital edition of *TCA* is now officially accessible to RAC members online, with the print edition currently rolling out to mailboxes. This issue features highlights from summer field operations and emergency communications exercises nationwide.

Whether you are building a new antenna or gearing up to upgrade your license this fall, there is plenty happening on the Canadian airwaves.

News Item	Status / Key Date	Impact for Operators
ISED Tower Consultation	Ongoing updates	Ensures fair protection for amateur antenna support structures.
RAC Basic Course	Starts Sept 27, 2026	Prepares candidates for entry-level licensing.
RAC Advanced Course	Starts Sept 27/28, 2026	Unlocks full HF power, repeater setup, and examiner privileges.
Fall 2026 eTCA	Available now	Bi-monthly national news, technical articles, and band reports.

Ontario & Local Niagara Repeater News: September 2026

Here is a quick status update on local repeater systems across the Niagara Peninsula and wider Southern Ontario region for this month's *Feedline*:

- **NPARC VE3NRS (147.240 MHz +107.2):** Serving as the backbone for the club's Wednesday Night Net (8:00 PM), the Thorold 2-meter repeater continues to provide excellent regional coverage across the Niagara Escarpment.
- **NPARC VE3WCD (147.300 MHz +107.2):** Fully operational for 2m analog traffic, providing solid fill-in coverage through Grimsby and the western Peninsula.
- **NPARC VE3RNR (443.175 MHz +107.2):** Operating in Yaesu System Fusion (AMS) auto-select digital/analog mode with WIRES-X interlinking enabled.

Local operators are encouraged to test digital voice nodes across the Niagara region.

- **ARES VE3RAF (145.190 MHz -107.2):** The Niagara ARES net continues its regular schedule every Monday night at 8:00 PM. Check-ins are always welcome to help test local emergency comms readiness.

If you notice any signal anomalies, elevated noise floors, or link issues on club machines, please drop a note to the technical committee.



What's NEW in Technology

Tony, VE3ZAV

Amateur radio is currently going through a major technological renaissance. While many still associate the hobby with analog voice and Morse code, recent innovations—driven by software, machine learning, modern semiconductor designs, and space tech—have transformed how hams experiment and communicate.

1. AI & Machine Learning Deep-Signal Codecs

- **RADE (Radio Artificial Intelligence Digital Encoding):** Developed for open-source digital voice platforms (like FreeDV), RADE uses neural networks to integrate quantization, forward error correction (FEC), and modulation. Instead of traditional vocoders, AI models compress human voice to transmit over raw analog phase-shift keying (PSK) at ultra-low signal-to-noise ratios.
- **AI Noise Reduction & Signal ID:** Transceivers and Software-Defined Radio (SDR) applications now use machine learning models trained on millions of RF samples to remove deep atmospheric noise, pull signals out of background static, and automatically classify modulated signals on waterfall displays.

2. Efficient RF Power via Polar Modulation

Traditional single-sideband (SSB) voice transmitters require highly linear Class-A or Class-AB amplifiers, which consume high amounts of power and dissipate significant heat.

- Modern portable designs (such as the *QRP Labs QMX* series) utilize **polar modulation**.
- By splitting amplitude and phase components, radios can drive ultra-efficient Class-E amplifiers. This allows pocket-sized HF radios to transmit high-quality SSB and digital signals using very little battery power.

3. Low-SNR & Weak-Signal Protocol Breakthroughs

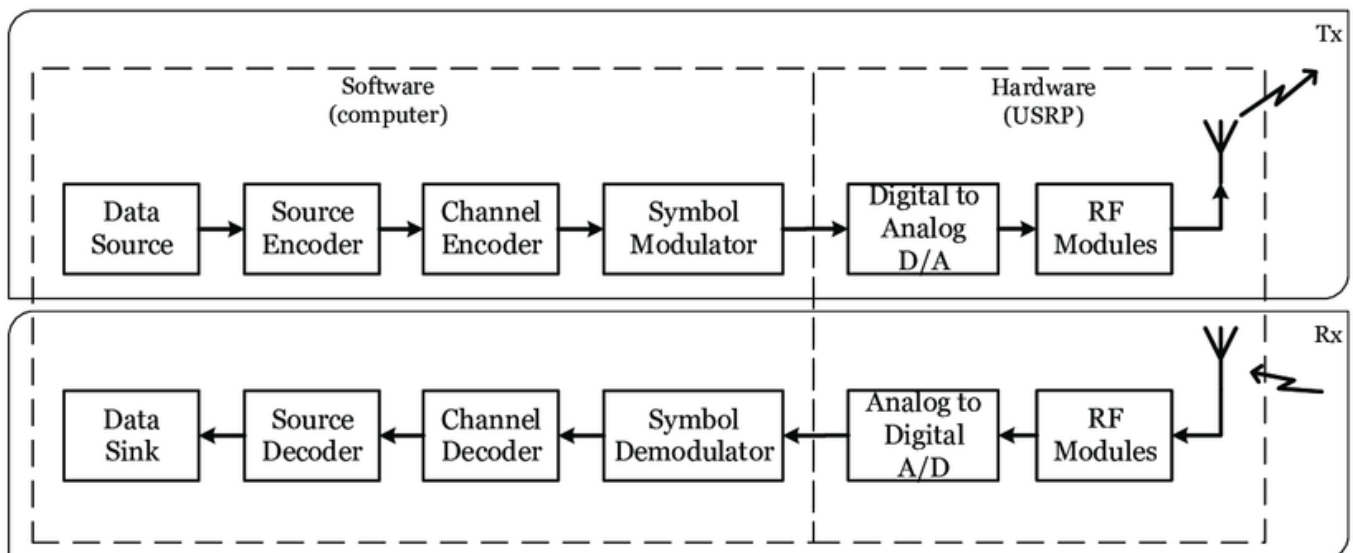
- **Sub-Noise Digital Modes:** Building on the massive success of FT8, newer weak-signal protocols like **JS8Call** and updated **VARA** modes allow keyboard-to-keyboard communication and reliable data transfers at signal levels as low as -32 dB—well below the audible noise floor.
- **M17 Project:** A completely open-source, non-proprietary digital voice and data protocol designed by the ham community to replace commercial proprietary digital voice standards (like DMR, D-STAR, and Fusion).

4. Mesh Networking & High-Speed Data (AREDN & APRS-LoRa)

- **AREDN (Amateur Radio Emergency Data Network):** Hams are repurposing commercial 2.4 GHz and 5.8 GHz Wi-Fi gear with custom firmware to create high-speed, self-healing IP mesh networks over the air. These networks deliver off-grid VoIP, video streaming, and chat services during grid outages without relying on internet infrastructure.
- **70cm LoRa-APRS:** Integrating long-range, low-power LoRa chips into the 70 cm band allows hams to send packet radio telemetry, GPS tracking, and text routing across miles on single-milliwatt battery power.

5. Software-Defined Radio (SDR) Hardware Maturation

- SDRs have shifted from niche computer peripherals to the primary standard across both entry-level and high-end rigs.
- Multi-channel direct-sampling SDRs allow operators to monitor dozens of bands simultaneously, log global propagation data automatically via networks like WSPRnet and PSKReporter, and handle firmware upgrades that add physical capability to radios without hardware changes.



In Summary I hope you have enjoyed this edition of Feedline and remember; this is a newsletter that needs YOUR material to make it a success !

I wish you all a SAFE and enjoyable FALL season and chat soon !

73's VE3ZAV Tony

NEXT CLUB MEETING : Weds October 14, 2026

Meridian Community Centre

NPARC Repeaters

VE3NRS

147.240+ 107.2 tone

Yaesu System Fusion Auto / Auto analog / digital – no wires-x

VE3WCD

147.300+ 107.2 tone

Yaesu System Fusion Auto / FM analog

VE3RNR

443.175+ 107.2 tone

Yaesu System Fusion Auto / Auto analog / digital – wires-x

Repeaters Update from Repeater Chair John va3wm

Just a brief repeaters update. All 3 NPARC repeaters are operational.

VE3NRS (FM and C4FM digital), VE3WCD (FM) and VE3RNR (FM and C4FM digital with wires-x) operate with reliable 100% availability.

Any questions or concern may be sent to John va3wm at repeaterchair@nparc.ca. Info may be found at <https://nparc.ca/repeater-list/>.

Nets

All certified / licensed operators are welcome.

NPARC Thursday weekly net 8:00 pm, on VE3NRS 147.240+ 107.2 Hz tone Net on hiatus during July and August.. Net preamble may be found [here](#). SWL's can check in by e-mail or text to [netcontrol @ nparc.ca](mailto:netcontrol@nparc.ca).

Niagara ACS net on VE3RAF, 145.190- 107.2 Hz tone Monday 8:00 pm.

Trans Canada IRLP net on VA3WAJ, 442.425+ 107.2 Hz tone, IRLP 9013, Wednesday, 11:00 am.

ONTARS daily net 3.755 +/- 7:00 am to 6:00 pm.