

HOT BANANAS

Oakville Amateur Radio Club

September 2004

VE3HB



Meetings: The Oakville Amateur Radio Club meets on the second Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. from Sept. to June at Oakville Town Hall 1st Floor in the Committee Rooms, Trafalgar Rd.

Breakfast: We also meet for breakfast at 7am most Saturdays at *Angel's Diner*, at 369 Speers Road.

Coffee: Finally, we meet at Friday 10:30 a.m. for coffee at Tim Horton's on Cross Road.

Please join us at all these meetings: All current and future radio amateurs are welcome!

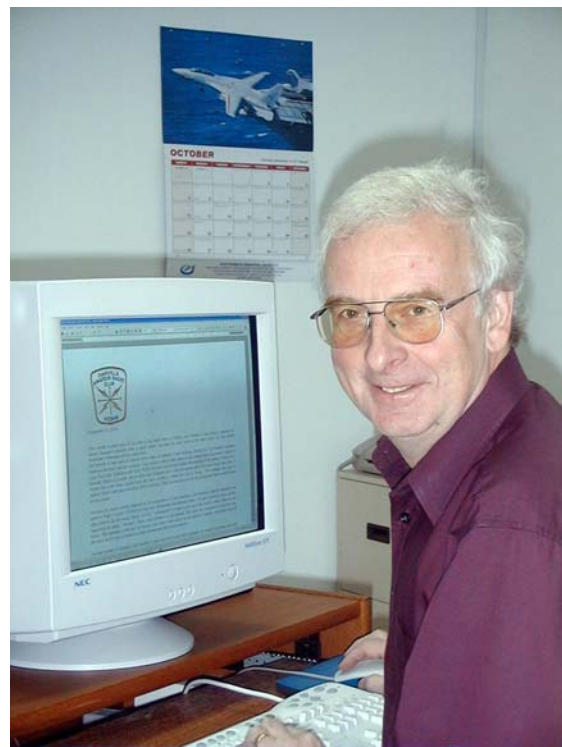
VE3OAK - 147.015 +.600 (131.8Hz CTCSS)
VE3OAK - 444.325 +5 MHz

NET: Mondays at 7:30 pm (except meeting nights and holidays) on 147.015 VHF.

www.oakvilleamateurs.net

President's Message

Summer is almost over and I welcome you back to the first issue of Hot Bananas for the 2004/2005 season. Ian, VE3ESH, the bulletin editor started to push for new articles in the middle of summer. Now, when the days are getting shorter I realized that it is the high time to work on my submission in order to have it ready for the last week of August.



The summer went quickly and here we come with a new meeting location and new plans for the upcoming ten months of OARC activities.

At our last meeting before the summer I made it quite clear that a new location for our club meetings must be found. I also ask for some help from the ranks of club

members. At this point I have to give credit to Derek, VE3DDL, who came to my house with a piece of paper – the phone number to a person at The Salvation Army. The rest of it, I was on my own. So, I visited Maj. Guenther in his office and after a short and friendly discussion we came to the agreement in principle for the cooperation of both organizations and hopefully even the storage of our radio station. That was one hurdle behind me and now I started the search for a meeting room. The condition was simple: a good location and very little, possibly no money to be paid for the usage. I know, this is something like asking for a cheap house along Lakeshore Road. A few recommended locations were quickly discarded one after the other. Then, a bright idea came to me. We all are paying dear tax money to this town, so why not ask the municipal politicians for some help. I wrote couple of letters, called Town Hall, but my feeling was, that the empty barrel would give me more echo than the telephone in those offices. Finally I got hold of Ward 5 councilor Mr. Grant and suddenly wheels were put in motion. Within three days I was able to sign the document giving the Oakville Amateur Radio Club access to a meeting room in the Town Hall. You can bet I had a good feeling about the accomplishment. Well, thank you Mr. Grant!

Only one restriction was placed upon us. No coffee service during the meeting! I do not see this as a big problem, as there is a Tim Horton near by. I hope that the friendly atmosphere of the meetings and a selection of good speakers will more than make for it.

That prompts me to start another paragraph.

The club activities! This is the theme, to which I am returning over and over. I know, a high percentage of the club members are retired gentlemen and quite rightfully expect to sit back and be served by others. But, the club has over sixty members. If only half of those would come with some idea or action, we as a club would be busy beyond the chance to accomplish them all. So, here comes the friendly warning: No input – no action. The directors of the club are trying to organize the meeting programs, but the telephone line or e-mails are always open for your suggestions.

We have a group of very active members, who participate at almost every ham radio contest. And with a measurable success! Basically the same group of amateurs made the core of radio operators during June's Field Day. For me, it was the pleasure to be part of this action. Many club members came there to help with the installation of antennas and the radio setup. We had four radio stations running, so even the less experienced contesters had a chance to try their operating skills. The preliminary results appear to be quite encouraging.

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For me, the only disappointment of the Field Day was a failure to use a digital communication mode. Week before the contest, in the comfort of my radio shack, I was preparing the software for RTTY, PSK31 and SSTV mode. The macros were written in the software, tested and I was sure that there is no way anything bad could happen. Yes, it happened! The computer was constantly resetting in the field conditions and no grounding rod of any length was good enough to stabilize it. One of the reasons for such uncooperative behavior was the location of our operating station. It was right smack under the antenna of the other station, which was working CW with a hefty power amplifier connected to the antenna. On top of it, my ICOM 706 refused to be tuned to the antenna at 14MHz for PSK31 mode. Every ham radio guru in the circle of half a mile came to the tent and tried to help. For that, I should say one more time, thank you. After a few frustrating hours we gave up and I moved the equipment back to the trunk of my car. There is a never mentioned end of this story. After the contest, when I came home I set up the equipment back in my shack and immediately I made four QSO's with the stations in Europe. Unfortunately these QSO's are not counted as additional points for the Field Day contest. So, believe me,

Murphy's Law really exists!

While closing this President's Message, I would like to remind you one more time, that as a club we can only survive and thrive if we work actively together. Come to the meetings in greater numbers, write the articles for our bulletin and have some suggestions. I will work closely with the directors to make sure that this year we will have interesting meetings and good cooperation when it comes to technical help or contesting.

73

Denny, VE3OKD

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Executives & Coordinators

Vice President	Brian Kremer	VE3DNF
Secretary	Greg Foster	VA3GGF
Treasurer	Jim Byers	VE3YZA
Director	Russ Schwandt	VE3JUJ

Club Coordinators 2004-2005

Membership	Russ Schwandt	VE3JUJ
Meeting Programs	Denny Zidek	VE3OKD
Emergency Services	Rick Harrison	VA3NV
Assistant Emergency Coordinators	Russ Schwandt	VE3JUJ
	Jack Livingstone	VE3ITM
	Rob Hagley	VA3WXR
VHF Net	Denny Zidek	VE3OKD
	& Club Directors	
Repeater Maintenance	Greg Foster	VA3GGF
	Harry Kosterman	VA3EC
	Gary Hetherington	VE3TGH
Web Site	Brian Kremer	VE3DNF
Bulletin Editor	Ian Amos	VE3ESH
Training and Examiner	Jack Livingstone	VE3ITM
Public Relations	Peter West	VE3HG

Editor's Note

Welcome to the first issue of Hot Bananas for the 2004 / 2005 club year. To start off the New Club Year we have a new meeting location thanks to Denny's hard work. Hopefully with the new location we will see a new and exciting club year with lots of member participation.

I have decided to issue the bulletin every other month because of the lack of material to publish. Last year we only had 3 regular contributors, including myself and it was tough not to just reprint articles that RAC and ARRL had already give lots of print too. So I will be looking for anything that you are doing that the members would be interested in. In the months that there is no bulletin please look to the website for updated information about club activities. We will also be sending out special information e-mails if they are needed to help

communicate club news as needed. Also Rick, VA3NV will be updating us regularly on ARES activities in the bulletin.



I also hope that I can get a few more members to write something small, so if you have something interesting, in radio related topic please share it with our members. If you can, the best format to submit articles are in a word processing format like Word, however I can convert just about anything as long as it is typed. Pictures can be any format, just e-mail them along with the text.

Our last club event was Field Day 2004, in June, and I can honestly say that this was a big success. Not only was our score great, but most importantly the number of members that came out and participated was just amazing. I would say from all of the comments that I got, everyone had a great time. Once again a big thank you to Mike, VE3QSK and his wife, Teri, for having us.

Hope you enjoy the bulletin and see on Monday the 13th for our first meeting.

73s
Ian, VE3ESH

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Let's be seen and heard!

by VE3HG – P.R. Coordinator

How many hams are there world wide? Csaba Gajdos, YO5OFH, reports on his web site <http://www.qsl.net/yo5ofh/yo5ofh.htm> that the International Amateur Radio Union estimates there are 2.6 million licensed ham radio operators. Japan has the most hams at 1.3 million and the U.S. is second with 632,000. Thanks to a lessening in the requirements for a license in Canada, we're at 50,000 plus and growing.

If, as some say, ham radio has never been as popular as it is today where are the newcomers? Where are the new hams in Oakville? My guess is they're sitting at home wondering how to get involved in our great hobby.

I can remember years back when this club and others would have 15 or 20 newcomers studying for their licenses every year. How did you get started? If you're like me, it was at a ham radio club. At first, it was all a big, exciting mystery but thanks to so many patient and enthusiastic hams I finally passed the exams including the dreaded CW test and I was on the air. Ham radio has never been the same since.

But how do newcomers find out about their local ham radio clubs? Sometimes it's by talking to the guy down the street with the big tower ☺. Sometimes it's attending a local Field Day event. Occasionally it's at a community event.

As your new OARC public relations coordinator (thank you all for this privilege), I am asking for your support and active assistance to promote ham radio and the Oakville Amateur Radio Club in our community. I am proposing we, as a club, get involved in community events from the point of promoting ham radio. I'm not talking about public service activities which is best left to the ARES.

I am recommending we ask organizers of Town events if we can participate by setting up ham radio demonstrations. I can see us with a booth and working station (HF rig on 40 meters using a dipole or vertical and run on batteries with all cabling secure and everything safely tied down is one thought that immediately comes to mind..) with one or two club members standing in front with handouts (which we can get from the RAC site) about ham radio and OARC.

When I was a member of the Skywide Club in Etobicoke I can remember staffing the ham radio demonstration station that was set up at the Sportsmen's Show. There

was also a demo station at the CNE. Who knows how many hundreds of people got their first taste of ham radio at these shows.

Here in Oakville we got Midnight Madness in July, the Oakville Museum family day in September, the downtown Harvest Festival in October; Waterfront Festival in June. These are all contenders and there's a ton of other event opportunities.

Field Day 2004

by Mike, VE3QSK

Apparently HAMs have been doing this since 1933. My experience doesn't go back quite that far. In 1989 after getting my ticket through the club, Brian Kremer (DNF) suggested I take over the lead on the Field Day set up. Sure! Great! What's Field Day? Well, you always remember the first one you participate in. For many it was where you made your first HF contact. Exciting however usually a very brief contact. Did I give him the right report? Oops not my call sign, use the clubs call sign! I think we've all been there. For me, many years and a few call signs ago. Well, shortly after the start of the contest, I walked by the "Get on the air" (GOTA) station just in time to hear Judy making her first HF contact ever. Jim (YZA) and Dave (DDA) were also part of that group. Jim working with his new homebrew F2 (nice rig Jim!). Derek (DDL) was not far away with the VHF/UHF station, tower and back up generator.

The GOTA station has been part of Field Day for a couple of years now. This is an excellent addition for a few reasons. This leaves the real contest group to focus on the big points. It then gives the new hams all the time they need to get comfortable behind the mic or key. It also provides for the occasional visitor to GOTA without having been previously scheduled.

Field Day prep really got going in April/May this year. Greg (GGF) had email to the group with possible configurations and operator schedules. I has many plans but little time and fell short of my preparation by that last weekend in June. Fortunately, when you put all the right heads together on the day, it just seems to get done. The CW station was set up in the garage, while the phone station was banished to the garden shed. A network cable between the 2 stations kept the two in sync using the latest in software. Very cool stuff and worth checking into if you have not see this. Surpizing that the Field Day package still includes a sample dupe sheet. For those not familiar with the dupe sheet, never mind, it's not coming back anytime soon.

Station set-up: We had planned to put up a 160M loop antenna. This is not something you want to design, manufacture, and try to put up with a deadline. Greg (GGF) had manufactured a "Lazy H" which was our best antenna based on the conditions on the day. The voice station used a doublet. Both were fed with ladder line and matched with a tuner.

Greg (GGF) and Tony (RZ) worked through the night and racked up the scores. Other operators included: DNF, OKD, VE2QV (David, our special guest and ringer), EC, ESH, JAQ, HG, and I know I am missing a few here. Score overall was about 7000 points. There were 935 CW contacts, 1107 Phone contacts and 1000 bonus points. Great job by all.

Dennis (JAQ) tried to make the satellite contact for this year. We experienced technical difficulties, however I understand they were not on our end.

It was great to see Russ (RMG) and Fred (DIM) who I had not seen in years. There were a few people absent who could not come out this year. They were certainly missed. You know who you are. Get out here for next year's event. No excuses!

Teri (my better half) was pleased to meet some of the faces behind the voices and the call signs. She is also wondering why we don't see more of the families attached to those call signs. With this in mind she has volunteered to participate in next year's event with some conditions. First (apparently) is the menu planning. Burgers and the Cosco sausages won't cut it for next year. (Teri is a Naturopath for those who don't get the humour in that). Second is the family content. She would like to turn the Saturday dinner time into a bigger event. Activities, group photo, etc. If anyone would like to help Teri make this happen, please let us know. 905-315-7887.

Next years event is June 25th & 26th. Tentatively scheduled for my back yard again, unless I hear otherwise.

73 de Mike (still QSK)

ARES Update for September, 2004

For those who are new to amateur radio, ARES stands for Amateur Radio Emergency Service. The Radio Amateurs of Canada website states the following about ARES:

"ARES is composed of licensed radio amateurs who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment for communications duty in the public service, when disaster strikes. Every licensed radio amateur, whether or not a member of RAC or any other local or regional organization, is eligible for membership in the Amateur Radio Emergency Service. The only qualification is a sincere desire to serve. The possession of emergency-powered equipment is desirable, but not a requirement."

Anyone, newbie or otherwise, interested in helping out during disasters, emergencies, or with public service communications (charitable fund raising events etc.) should contact me (contact info provided below).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those people who have continued to check into the Oakville ARES net each Monday evening throughout the summer. While not large in number, this group is extremely dedicated and I applaud their efforts. Thanks also to Russ, VE3JUZ, our Oakville ARES official RAC Bulletin Station. Each week Russ reads the latest RAC section bulletin during the ARES net. The bulletin is an excellent source of information and news on many facets of amateur radio.

As mentioned above, the Oakville ARES net takes place on Monday evenings (except on those Monday evenings when an OARC meeting is being held). The frequency is 444.325 MHz. (+) and the time is 7 pm. Sometimes, for those without 70 cm. radio equipment, there is a 2 meter cross band link into the net on 146.580 MHz. simplex. Please check in, all are welcome – you don't need to be an ARES member to participate.

A very interesting ARES net is held at 8:30 pm. each Thursday. This is the Golden Horseshoe ARES Net, and you can access it on one of the following frequencies:

VE3SNM Repeater (Toronto) - 442.850 MHz. tx. pl 136.5 hz.

VA3WAJ Repeater (St. Catherines) - 442.425 MHz. tx. pl. 107.2 hz.

VE3WIK Repeater (Carlisle) - 443.675 MHz. tx. pl. 131.8 hz.

In addition, there is a 2 meter cross band link into the UHF system. It can be found on 146.460 MHz. Sometimes the 146.715 MHz. 2 meter repeater in Hamilton (can't recall the call sign right now) is hooked into the system as well. Check-ins from Halton Region are fairly sparse, so if you get the chance to check in, please do so.

If anyone still has an active packet radio set up, the Peel ARES – ARC group runs a Thursday evening packet net

on the HALTON node. The time is 8 pm., and the frequency is 145.610 MHz. Once you're connected, type T and you should be hooked into the net.

An updated call out tree has been completed. Those of you who don't have it yet should be receiving a copy by email shortly. Please note that several of the rows have been changed completely, so don't rely on an old copy or you'll be completely out of step with the rest of us.

Oakville ARES has three Assistant Emergency Coordinators. I have recently shifted their job duties around. The list now looks like this:

Russ Schwandt, VE3JUZ - AEC Region of Halton Liaison

Rob Hagley, VA3WXR - AEC Oakville Red Cross Operations

Jack Livingstone, VE3ITM - AEC without portfolio

I'm currently looking for someone to serve as our packet radio representative to HRECT (Halton Region Emergency Communications Team). This is the Regional steering group that provides volunteer emergency communications service to the Region of Halton during emergencies or disasters.

ARES groups in Peel Region, the City of Toronto, York Region and the City of Barrie are working together in an attempt to restore some of the packet radio backbone and BBSes (what's the plural of BBS?) in the GTA for ARES and emergency communications use. There is also some interest in this project in Hamilton-Wentworth and Niagara Regions. In light of this, HRECT is exploring a return to packet radio operations in Halton. There are still a few nodes that are operational, and the odd BBS.

Each HRECT member club has been asked to provide someone who is willing to look into restoring packet radio in the Region. Anyone with a packet radio or APRS background would be excellent for the job. This isn't an AEC level position (at least not yet), but who knows what the future may bring. If interested in the position, please contact me.

U p c o m i n g E v e n t s

Fall always seems to be the busy time for ARES events and activities. This year is no exception.

Sunday, September 19 - Halton Lung Association Bike Event

This is the 100 km. bike tour that starts at Coronation Park in Oakville, goes up through Milton, winds around the Northerly part of Halton Region, then returns to

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Coronation Park. The lead communication agency for this event is Oakville REACT. This is the third year that they have requested our assistance. The event should run from somewhere around 9 am until about 3 pm. If available for all, or part of the day please let me know.

Thursday, October 14 - Region of Halton Major Disaster Exercise

Details not currently available for this event. However, the Oakville Red Cross is involved so, most likely, we will be as well. If available that day, please let me know.

Sunday, October 17 - Oakville ARES Meeting (tentative) 1 – 4 pm. (flexible)

During last year's ARES training, many people felt that an ARES meeting should be held once or twice a year. The last meeting was nine months ago. It's time for another one. All are invited to attend – ARES members and non members alike. If you plan to attend, please let me know. If there is enough interest, I will make arrangements for a meeting location and arrange for one or two guest speakers.

Saturday, October 30 - Red Cross Exercise

This is an exercise that will involve all Red Cross branches in the Region of Halton. Outside of the date, and the fact that it will last for 4 hours, I have no further information. If you can help out, please advise.

Saturday, October 30 and Sunday, October 31 - Halloween Patrol

For the past three years we, along with Oakville REACT, have been involved in providing extra eyes and ears for the Halton Regional Police Service on both Hell Night, and All Hallows Eve (Halloween). The NCS works out of the Region of Halton Emergency Operations Centre. This has been a very useful and effective service that we have provided. I'm currently taking volunteers for either, or both, days. Let me know if you can assist.

Hmm... this would be an interesting time to explore the use of APRS to track some of our vehicles while they were out on patrol. The EOC has all the equipment necessary for an APRS set up... Any takers?

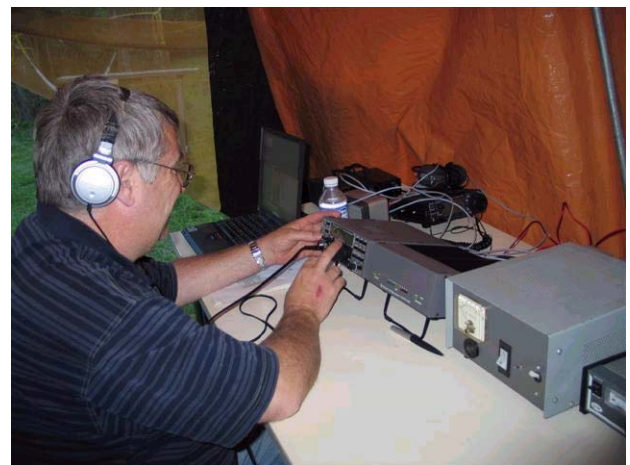
Contact Info

Rick Harrison, VA3NV Emergency Coordinator
Oakville ARES – Oakville ARC

Phone: 905-808-0432

Email: va3nv@rac.ca

A Field Day of Pictures for 2004



QRT by VE3HG

About six weeks ago I started a dialogue with the Town of Oakville about erecting an antenna support system (RAC recommended language so we don't use the word tower) in my backyard. Guess what? We're still talking. I think that's a good thing.



The town tells me that it has a policy of 16.6 meters for towers – oops, I mean antenna support systems. That equals roughly 53 feet. I've got trees that are encroaching on that height at the back of my yard where I want to put the support structure so I've asked for an exemption to the policy. Sounds like a pretty simple request?

Apparently not! Seems Industry Canada has been working behind the scenes at municipal conferences and meetings to remind municipalities that they don't have the right to dictate antenna support system height. That legislation is administered by Industry Canada. Thus the Town of Oakville passed a policy concerning antenna support systems.

The policy was passed after a ham, who shall remain nameless here, decided to erect a 48-foot tower in his townhouse-size backyard. Any guesses what was the reaction of his neighbours? They went ballistic. They complained to anyone who would listen. They called in the politicians who went on a crusade to save the neighbourhood. Unfortunately the Town discovered it didn't have jurisdiction so Council passed a policy.

So what's the policy? It limits antenna support systems to 16.6 meters. In conversation with town staff, nobody, so far, seems to know exactly how the policy is worded and how it can be applied. It seems that it hasn't been evoked since that unfortunate incident in the townhouse backyard. I was quick to point out that "natural law"

suggests a law or policy which isn't enforced or is unenforceable can't remain on the books. There was some mumbled agreement with my comment.

Now I've heard some hams say why not let sleeping dogs lie and just put up the tower, err antenna support system, and forget it. Harold MacFarlane, VE3BPM, owner of MacFarlane Electronics told me of a ham in North York who ordered a 53-foot plus tower and had it installed only to have the municipality order it dismantled. This ham is appealing the decision. Good luck. (By the way Harold is a stocking retailer of Delhi Towers. I'm buying a used bottom section from him. Seems like a good guy.)

RAC also recommends notifying immediate neighbours of the installation about a week before erection. The notification is just that. It invites comments but doesn't ask for permission. This seals off any potential future problems with neighbours.

I can live with a 48-foot tower plus five feet of mast. I'd like to go to 56 or 62 feet and, while the Delhi is self-supporting in a couple of tons of concrete, I'm looking at putting in three guys so I can install a larger HF array without worry of overloading the structure. With the tower at the back of the yard, where a tributary of 14-Mile Creek cuts through the neighbourhood, the entire structure will be almost invisible hidden by trees.

Because the coaxial runs will be around 175 feet, I'm buying LMR-400 ultra low-loss coax and I'll use a five-position remote switch mounted on the tower. I'll bury the coax, rotor and switch cables in conduit pipe and run it under the back lawn. All in all this should be a fabulous antenna and tower. There I said it: tower!

Editor's Note: Peter later got the final say from the Town and adds the following:

I heard from the Town late in August. If I want to exceed the 16.6 metre provincial height recommendation, the Town will insist I applied for a building permit and provide engineering papers in regards to the tower and its installation. Permits cost \$200. Also, if any of the neighbours complained about the extra height, the Town might invoke its local policy that suggests any structure over 16 feet in height might be considered as a non-conforming structure and would need to be discussed at the political level by Town council. You maybe able to imagine how much I want to avoid this situation so I am proceeding with a 48-foot Delhi tower and a five foot mast for a total height of 53 feet.

73,
Peter, VE3HG