

# HOT BANANAS

Oakville Amateur Radio Club

September 2005

## VE3HB



**Meetings:** The Oakville Amateur Radio Club meets on the second Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. and meetings will be held at the Oakville Fire Department Training Campus at 1144 South Service Road West.

**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 Ave.

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](http://www.oakvilleamateurs.net)

President	Greg Foster	VA3GGF
Vice President	Brian Kremer	VE3DNF
Treasurer	Jim Byers	VE3YZA
Secretary	Russ Schwandt	VE3JUZ
Director	Denny Zidek	VE3OKD

### Club Coordinators 2004-2005

Membership	Russ Schwandt	VE3JUZ
Meeting Programs	Denny Zidek	VE3OKD
Emergency Coordinator	Rick Harrison	VA3NV
Assistant Emergency Coordinators	Russ Schwandt	VE3JUZ
	Jack Livingstone	VE3ITM
	Rob Hagley	VA3WXR
VHF Net	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

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# President's Message

Well it has been a couple of months since we met formally as a club and acclaimed our set of directors. While the names are the same there has been a changing of positions within the executive. Your executive team for the 2005-2006 season is as follows

President	Greg	VA3GGF
Vice-President	Brian	VE3DNF
Secretary	Russ	VE3JUZ
Treasure	Jim	VA3YZA
Director	Denny	VE3OKD

I would like to thank my fellow executive members for letting their names stand for this season and I look forward to working with them again throughout the coming year.

These are exciting times for Oakville Amateur Radio Club and for Canadian hams in general. In the latter half of last year we ran a very successful course. The course was originally slated to be for those who wanted to get their 5 wpm Morse code certification allowing them full HF privileges but as it turned out there was a need for the basic theory as well. Jack VE3ITM with the assistance of Peter VE3HG, Brian VE3DNF and Mike VE3QSK ran both the theory and Morse sections of the course. The following successfully upgraded their privileges

Darren	VA3EGG	5 WPM
Jim	VA3YZA	5 WPM
Garth	VA3CGR	5 WPM
Brad	VA3COX	5 WPM
Derek	VA3DDL	5 WPM

And the following are newly licensed amateurs:

Brian	VA3MBK	Basic
Ian	VA3IPC	Basic
Marion	VE3HEN	Basic & 5 WPM
Mark	VA3MBO	Basic & 5 WPM

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate each of the students for their achievement.

This past summer has seen a significant change in the licensing rules for Amateurs in Canada. It is now possible for an Amateur passing a Basic theory exam with a mark of 80% or higher to gain full HF privileges. Along with this change those who passed

their Basic theory exam prior to April 2, 2002 or those that have their advanced theory have been granted Full HF privileges. For a full description of the licensing changes please check out the following URL

<http://www.rac.ca/news/canada.htm#Industry%20Canada%20Introduces> .

This change in licensing means we will have a higher than normal influx of HF operators. Operating HF is not as simple as buying a handheld, dialing in the local repeater and pushing the PTT. There are different issues on HF such as safety factors, RFI concerns, higher power outputs and operating procedures. I encourage all of you to be patient and provide guidance to these amateurs with their new found privileges. To those new HF operators respect the works of guidance from the "old guard" as they are the ones that have molded this hobby into what it is today. This is a positive move for our hobby and an opportunity to grow. As we are fundamentally self governing in Canada the onus is on all of us to insure the hobby maintains its level of "professionalism"

With that on a more personal note I have added a 14AVQ (10-40) along with ground radials to my antenna farm over the summer. I still need to finish the ¼ wavelength vertical for 160 but that should be done shortly. Once the weather cools a couple of indoor projects lined up are to build and interface between the rig and the band pass filter to allow for auto switching and to improve the rig/computer interface to allow for reliable digital modes.

73 and good DX

Greg  
VA3GGF

## Editor's Note

Welcome to the September issue of Hot Bananas for the 2005 / 2006 club year. Well the summer has really passed by quickly, and I have not even been able to get on the air for more than a couple of hours. I have just got back from my annual summer vacation and I was reminded by my calendar that it was time to get busy with the first issue of Hot Bananas. So here goes!!



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The last full weekend in August is the annual Contest Club of Ontario's (CCO) annual meeting (BBQ), which brought over 50 hams from across Ontario to John, VE3EJ's super station. Visiting John's station with his 5 towers and 30 plus antennas is a great way to get excited about a new ham season. Meeting new hams and greeting old friends at the BBQ reminded me why I like to belong to radio clubs..... It's just plain fun.

So speaking of clubs, the Oakville club executives have a great year planned with some really good speakers, which might just top last years great line up. So if you are not an O.A.R.C. member, PLEASE JOIN, if you are, join the fun at the monthly meetings. For non-members that use the Oakville repeaters, please help support the cost of maintaining the repeater by joining, membership is only \$25.00.

Also, while talking about clubs, if you are not a member of Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC), please consider joining and supporting your one and only national voice to Industry Canada. This link is what helps us to operate our stations and enjoy our hobby.

Hope you enjoy the bulletin and see you at the next meeting.

73,  
Ian, VE3ESH

### ***Hot Bananas***

The Oakville Amateur Radio Club  
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109 Thomas St., Oakville, Ont., L6J 7R4.

### **Editor:**

Ian S. Amos, VE3ESH

### **Publisher:**

Oakville Amateur Radio Club  
President Greg Foster, VA3GGF

# Oakville Amateur Radio Club – Annual General Meeting - Minutes

June 13, 2005

1. Denny VE3OKD opened the meeting, welcoming the 16 members present.
2. The meeting room for the club in the 2005/2006 season is still up in the air. We hope to have use of the Fire Departments training facility again but as a back up we will pursue a room at the town hall.
3. Ian VE3ESH has agreed to continue as the editor for Hot Bananas as long as he has enough content to make it worthwhile. The onus is on all members to provide Ian with material we think may be of interest to the rest of the club. He will be limiting the number of publications to 4 this year (Sept, Nov, Feb & May).
4. Finances have gone well this year, we should be looking at a figure of +\$300. Jim VA3YZA will ask John VE3CPR to audit the books at the end of July.
5. Ron VE3FII as a result of his move has donated much of his amateur gear to the club. We will review the equipment and decide which equipment should be kept and which should be liquidated.
6. Brian VE3DNF continues to run the website. As with Hot Bananas Brian is always looking for content for the web site to keep it up to date. If anyone has any web content please forward it to Brian.
7. Field Day 2005 – Field Day this year will be held at Mike VE3QSK's QTH (5166 Appleby Line in Burlington). We intent to run two HF stations (one CW/Digital, one SSB) along with a GOTA and VHF/UHF stations. There will be a family BBQ on the Saturday evening so hope to see everyone throughout the weekend.
8. A couple of tower projects are underway. Peter VE3HG is in the process of raising his tower and his Explorer and Jack VE3ITM is looking to take his down. Everyone is welcome to come and assist at these two events, the more the merrier.
9. ARES – Rick VE3YRH has been in discussion with the Red Cross about operating positions for ARES at the new Red Cross building.
10. Local Nets will be suspended throughout the summer months, starting back up in September.
11. Oakville Amateur Radio Club has been asked to assist at the Oakville Waterfront Festival. As this is the same weekend as Field Day our resources will be stretched but only two operators will be required on each shift at the festival. This will help raise awareness of our hobby in the community.
12. Election of Directors – There was not need for an election again this year as only five members allowed their names to stand. The five acclaimed directors are:
  - a. Denny VE3OKD
  - b. Brian VE3DNF
  - c. Russ VE3JUJ
  - d. Jim VA3YZA
  - e. Greg VA3GGF
13. DIZZY IZZY Award – Is awarded annually to the club member who makes the most country contacts between October and April. Congratulations (again) to Mike VA3GRL.
14. Amateur of the Year is awarded each year to the club member that has given of them selves to the improvement of the hobby throughout the current year. Congratulations to Derek VE3DL.

# How not to be a lid

## On HF, VHF and UHF

### Part I

By Peter West – VE3HG

“Lid” – according to the ARRL operating manual - a lid is a poor operator.

Now that Industry Canada has changed the rules for licensing ham radio, there's been a flurry of activity by new hams getting on the air. This is a good thing. It's good for ham radio. It's good for the new hams and it's good for us “old timers” as well.

What's not so good about it is an appalling lack of basic operating procedures. This is not the fault of the new people on the air. Standard protocol isn't well covered in the ham radio license handbook. This problem is the responsibility of those of us who have been around long enough to know better and it's past time that we communicate this knowledge to those of us who don't know any better.

The good news is there's been lots of chatter on the repeaters about procedure and etiquette and for anyone new who has been listening, there's been a wealth of good advice offered and I trust received. So, if you happen to recognize yourself here, do not despair for we have all done something the same when we were new. The good news is there's still time to change some operating procedures before they become habits and you end up with the title of “lid”.

Let's start with some general rules of behaviour and work our way down the bands from VHF/UHF communications protocol to HF operations.

While procedures on repeaters can be more informal than on HF, there are some things you should do and some you shouldn't do. For example, it's in the regulations that you must identify yourself every 30 minutes. That doesn't mean it's okay to drop a comment into an ongoing conversation without identifying yourself. Sure most people know who you are by your voice but the correct way to begin any transmission is with your call sign.

Here's an example of how to do it right: “VA3GGF VE3HG”.

The reply is “VA3GGF VE3HG”.

That's it. Anyone listening knows that VE3HG is the calling station and VA3GGF is the station being called.

If you are looking to speak with anyone who is listening, here's the way to do it: “VE3HG”. Again it's your call sign given once. There's no need to say “VE3HG on the air” or “VE3HG listening” (although I am guilty of this bad habit myself) and again, you give your call sign only once. If no one comes back to you and you're really want to talk to someone either try another repeater or wait at least five minutes and give your call sign again – once.

You will hear people calling by saying “VA3GGF are you there Greg? This is VE3HG”. Not only is this a big waste of airtime but it doesn't make sense. If Greg isn't there, he isn't going to answer you. Even if he is there, he might not want to answer you. And if you called me this way, I probably wouldn't answer you.

If there's an ongoing conversation in progress between two or three stations and it's on a specific topic don't break in with your call sign unless you've got something pertinent to add. Listen first before joining in. If it's obvious that the two stations are having what I will call a private conversation then don't bother them.

Some repeaters have an informal, but regular, Monday to Friday drive-in and drive-out from work roundtable. Normally newcomers are more than welcome to just jump in. But before you do, listen to the conversations and know who to hand it off to when you're finished talking. You get into the roundtable by dropping your call sign in between transmissions.

Never use the word “break” or call out “break break” to get into a roundtable as this is viewed by many hams as an emergency call. Just insert your call sign once when there's a short break between conversations.

Another really annoying practice is the behaviour of the well-meaning repeater controller or helper. He or she is the one who, if you're noisy, jumps in to tell you. They will also keep track of who is calling who and when you sign on, they're there to tell you who was looking for you. If you mention you're looking for something, they're ready to break in to tell you where it can be found. While this behaviour is well-meaning, it can get annoying and takes up repeater time. Eventually people go to other repeaters or other bands just to get some relief from “Mr. or Mrs. Helpful”.

Occasionally you might miss a call. Some handi-talkies have a battery-saving delay circuit which can crunch up the first syllable of a call sign. If you think you missed a call, just give your call sign. If someone was actually calling for you, they'll come back to your call. If the call was for someone else, they may wish to not speak with you at that moment.

Don't ask "Was someone calling for me" or "Was someone calling VE3HG?" The proper way to check if someone wants to speak with you is to give your call – once!

By the way, the correct way to say best regards is to say 73 and not 73s, which is best regards-s. And love and kisses is given as 88 not 88s.

There is also some terminology creeping in our conversations that's straight from the CB band. Now before anyone gets upset I must admit I was a CB for years (XM42757) and I loved it. But when I migrated to ham radio, I left my CB lingo back on the CB band.

For example, I cringle whenever I hear someone say the personal here is or my handle is. This just sounds so affected. It's called your name and there's no need to spell it phonetically unless they other operator can't get it straight.

Some people use CBer's slang to describe the orientation of antennas such as flat side instead of horizontal. Not only is this confusing to newcomers but it just isn't technically correct. With so many in the ham radio community either interested in radio technology from an amateur or professional point of view, it's only proper to use the correct terminology when describing technical things. Besides many of us who aren't electrical engineers worked very hard to get a grasp of the technological terminology and it just doesn't work for us to hear it bent out of shape.

One question I get asked is about the use of Q signals on repeaters. On most repeaters the use of Q signals is limited to the common ones and plain language should prevail. Sometimes during rough conditions the old Q signals can come in quite handy but for the most part the repeater system is just like an old party-line telephone system and everyone can understand you just fine when you speak in plain language.

This party-line idea applies to married couples that are both licensed and on the air. I've explained to Marion (my XYL) that we don't talk about business, family or personal matters on the air. We especially don't mention if we're going away for the weekend or on holidays as

this is just an invitation to someone to break in as our addresses are on the RAC website with our call signs.

There are some topics that are verboten on ham radio. Politics, religion, personal issues (unless you are having a personal conversation with someone who is really interested in your health problems – most aren't), sex, drugs and any other topic which might remotely make anyone, of any age, uncomfortable. Remember too, that there are lots of folks who listen in on the repeater conversations.

This is especially true and important when you're using the IRLP computer/repeater linking system or when you're on HF talking to someone in another country. In some countries, the mere casual mention of an ongoing political or criminal situation can end that operator up in real trouble with his national government. Do not discuss these issues on the air with anyone at anytime.

While on the air, anyone listening should be able to identify which station is transmitting, this is also true for IRLP as well. The proper way to bring up a node is:

1. VA3GGF for the node (This is the first transmission.);
2. Key in the DTMF tone for the node;
3. Once connected place your call or identify yourself as you would on your local repeater;
4. Identify yourself at the end of each transmission (this helps others locally to know you are on the IRLP);
5. At the end of your QSO and the link has been dropped (be sure it has) then clear the frequency by saying VA3GGF clear.

When clearing a frequency, you aren't "over and out". You can be over and you can be out but you can't be over and out. I learned this during my old Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) days.

Finally, there's a reason why mobile microphones have a device to hang or clip them safely away. It's to prevent you from sitting on your microphone and accidentally depressing the push to talk button. If there are two or more people in the car in conversation while this happens, it can be a really interesting and embarrassing time for all involved. Remember to hang your microphone up in your mobile.

There's a lot more to learn about ham radio. Getting your license is just a start. We learn by doing and I hope this article and the next one makes getting on the air a pleasure for you and the rest of your ham radio community.

## Field Day 2005 by VE3QSK

How about that field day. Wonderful hot weather, muggy warm night, lots of fun at dinner time on Saturday, and...well, another year gone by. Honourable mention goes to the brains behind the event, Greg Foster (GGF), our field day coordinator. He really brought everything together. Special thanks to my wonderful wife who has not only tolerated us two years in a row, but who actually has a good time with it all! She keeps threatening to get her ticket, but I'm starting to think she's full of hot air...which may serve her well as a ham.

I have really enjoyed my role in field day over the past few years. There is a certain excitement surrounding an event that brings everyone together. Officially Field Day is an emergency preparedness exercise and an opportunity for new hams and the public to experience amateur radio. Can you remember the excitement of your first HF contact? Mine was on phone and the 20 meter band at Shell Park during the night shift. I was not scheduled as an operator, nor did I have a license at that time. John Scheralli sat me down, stuck the microphone in my hand, explained the protocol and left. After that first nervous contact I jumped out of the tent to tell someone ... but there was no one around. So I went back in the tent and kept making contacts. I was hooked. Congratulations to the new hams who experienced that excitement this year...and remember ham radio is a full contact sport!

The GOTA station was a real success this year. Contacts were up 100% over last year with 200 Qs. The GOTA station also provides a venue for the social aspects of the hobby. Don't tell the contest group but there are those who come out *just for the fun of it*. I was pleased to see Ernst (ZUF) with his experimental (20Meter) antenna. I'm not sure what he calls it, possibly a vertical loop. Brian (DNF) also had a (20 Meter) EH antenna. Dave (DDA) and Derek (DDL) built the VHF and UHF "*these will never die*" stainless steel yagis for the occasion. We missed Derek this year (awfully quiet Teri said) however Dave and Judy filled in on the VHF/UHF station.

We had some challenges when it came to our score this year. Propagation was one of the biggest obstacles. Number of available operators was down. Who goes to a wedding on field day anyway? An even better question, who *plans* a wedding on field day??? The waterfront festival also drew our attention this year, so

all and all we were spread a little thin. This was the first year I recall that we shut down the generator for the night. The last trooper signed off at about 12:30 am and the first morning activity was about 5:30. Our total score was 3482 points. 287 CW Qs, 26 Digital Qs, and 767 Phone Qs. Scores everywhere will be down so we will have to wait until November for QST to publish the results and our ranking in the contest.

Speaking of troopers, I was a little surprised to see a motorcycle cop drive through our setup. Of course the first thoughts are "what did we do?????" Luckily he was there by invitation and provided additional bonus points. He did not stay long, dressed in dark blue with a Kevlar vest on, in 35deg wx. I believe he preferred to keep moving.

The social evening was a great success, however, as the host I may be slightly biased. I'm just glad the roast turned out OK because it was the first time we used the rotisserie and kind of winged it. Many thanks for all the delicious salads and deserts. The kids had fun on the trampoline despite the heat. They also worked hard and provided bonus points under a new category for operators under age eighteen. Thank you! There are some great pictures available on the web page of the setup the contest and the fun. I urge you to check them out.

I've always found that this club rises to the occasion. What I mean is we thrive on a challenge. With the recent tsunami, category 4 hurricane, wars and terrorist threats the chance that amateur radio operators will be called on for their expertise seems increasingly real. When all else fails there's ham radio. Would we be ready for a call to action? Perhaps our field day exercise is too comfortable. Maybe next year, in a new twist, the coordinator should be informed of the location only the night before. The conversation at breakfast that morning would be different.

Ready for a challenge?

## QRT by VE3HG

Thanks to their own hard work and some tinkering with the qualifications for licensing, we've got a whole lot of new hams across Canada with HF privileges. Funny thing about this situation is now we've got quite a few folks who want to operate on HF to take advantage of this new licensing.



HF operation is a lot more complex and challenging than operating on VHF and UHF FM repeaters. On top of that, it's much easier to cause interference to surrounding TVs and radios when transmitting on HF than VHF and UHF. You have to know how to set up an interference free station (grounding and filtering is key). It's not easy to do all this alone.

That is one of the main reasons for joining a local ham radio club. Here you can access hundreds of years of ham radio experience just by asking. Already this summer, club members have helped other members to raise a tower and antenna (thanks everyone), take down a similar system, fix a couple of antennas and even help out with a contest log problem.

HF operation, and indeed VHF and UHF operation, can be dangerous. Erecting towers and lifting big antenna systems isn't for the novice. Working with amplifiers can expose you to lethal voltages. *QST* and *CQ* magazine too often have articles about hams who got hurt (or killed in one recent situation) when they didn't obey the safety rules. That's one of the good things about belonging to the Oakville club. We're blessed to have members who know how to safely enjoy our hobby. They're quick to share that information with newcomers.

In case you haven't got the point yet, it's time to renew your membership. There is a lot more to a successful ham radio club than just attending meetings. In addition to all the free assistance, your membership fees help fund club activities and keep the club repeater on the air. (You don't want to be a freeloader on the repeater do you?)

I'm looking forward to seeing you all at the next club meeting and talking with many newcomers on the bands.