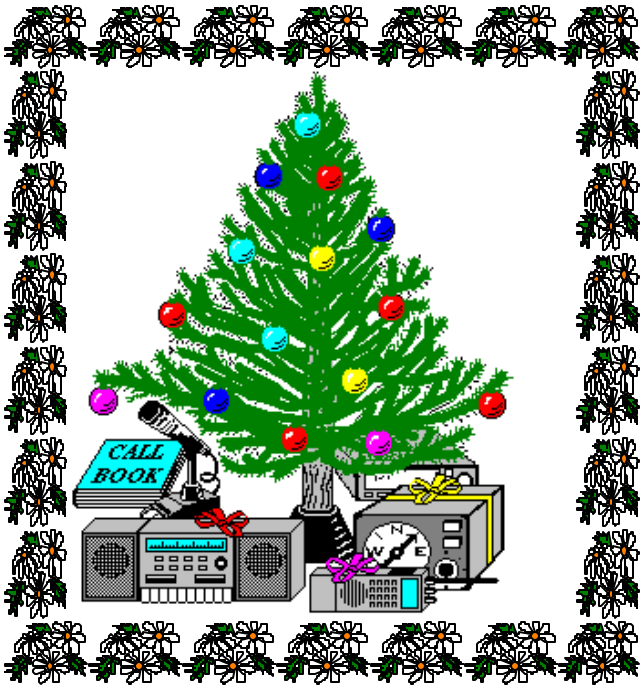
Manitoba Repeater Society

The Repeater

Winter 2004 — Distributed to all Current Members



VE4CDN Update
By Dick, VE4HK

Yori VE4ACX, Gord VE4GLS and Dick VE4HK travelled to the VE4CDN repeater site, at the Paterson grain elevator in Morris, Saturday, November 27. The purpose was to clean up the shack containing our equipment, to replace the duplexers, and to box in our radios. We began by building a frame of 2x4 lumber around the radios and duplexers, then added a top panel of 3\4 inch plywood. Next, 2x6 legs were added for strength. Finally, the sides were framed in with 3/8 inch plywood. This should reduce infiltration of grain dust in our equipment. The reason for such heavy lumber is that the elevator staff sit on top of our box, while filling rail cars with grain. We do not want any collapses.

While Dick and Gord were performing carpentry wizardry, Yori replaced the duplexers and checked out the radios. They now work much better than before. When you are in the Morris area, please try VE4CDN, and tell me how it is working compared to before the upgrade. VE4CDN frequency 147.27-

Important Dates:

MRS: Thursday at 9:00 pm MRS Semi-Weekly Net
Sunday at 1:00 pm - MRS Semi-Weekly Net

WARC: De. 13 - Christmas Party
Jan. 10 -Care & Feeding of Batteries

WSC: 2nd Thurs. of month - Breakfast - Garden City Inn
December 7th - Christmas Party
December 15th - Annual General Meeting

Others Dec. 4 - ARES - SKYWARN Recognition Day
Dec. 21 - ARES - Canwest Global Park Paramedic

Nets: Daily 01:00 UTC	MB Evening Phone net 3760 KHz
Daily 01:30 UTC	Prairie traffic Net (CW) 3660 KHz
Daily 02:30 UTC	Aurora #2 net 7055 KHz
Daily 14:30 UTC	MB Wx Net 3743 KHz
Weekdays 9:00	Seniors morning net 147.390 MHz
Wed. 9:00 pm	Six Meter net 50.238 MHz.
Thursday 9:00pm	MRS Net 147.390 MHz +
Sunday 9:00pm	MRS Net 147.390 MHz +

M.R.S. Current Executive

President	Ed Richardson	VE4EAR	254-8425
V/President	Wayne Ludman	VE4WKL	224 -1449
Secretary	Dick Maguire	VE4HK	256-3143
Treasurer	Paula Ehn	VE4MHZ	667-7818
Membership	Roy Maguire	VE4EN	669-1355
Technical	Gord Snarr	VE4GLS	746-2743
Directors	Yori Tsuji	VE4ACX	453-3786
	Walter Bezpalko	VE4VB	284-3054
	Allen Homenick	VA4AA	489-6518
	Ed Horton	VE4EIH	885-4084
Past Pres.	Derek Hay	VE4HAY	257-1420

M.R.S. Current Fee Schedule

Current & Renewal Members
$25.00 per calendar year

New members only - Pro-rated quarterly

January to December	$25.00
April - December	$18.75
July to December	$12.50
October to December	$ 6.25

- First time members are no longer required to pay a one time only initiation fee of $10.00 on top of the regular fee. Their membership fee is pro-rated for the first year only.

- Family membership is for each additional members residing at the same residence as the initial member. $10.00 each

Industry Canada Amateur Centre

Voice 1-888-780-3333 (toll-free)
Fax: 1-613-991-5575
E-mail: spectrum.amateur@ic.gc.ca
Web: http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/spectrum

The Repeater Advertising Rates:

All advertising is black & white and must be submitted in electronic format.

full page $75.00
½ page $40.00
¼ page $20.00
bus.card $10.00

For more information or to place an ad please contact any executive member.

Comments or if you just want to reach us :

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C/O VE4WSC
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http://www.ve4.net/mrs/

Gimli VHF Antenna Relocation

By Dick, VE4HK

Saturday, October 30, 5 members of the MRS executive trekked up to the Diageo plant in Gimli. Our main objective was the long anticipated relocation of the VE4GIM VHF 210C4 antenna to the DMX tower in the centre of the roof. It had been attached to the railing in one corner of the building.

The second objective was to locate and, hopefully, cure the noise problem which has been affecting the VHF side of the Gimli repeater. The technical committee felt that one possible cause of the noise might be a bad ground where the antenna was clamped to the railing.

The weather was just almost perfect for tower installations, cold and windy with a low overcast. The only thing missing was rain or snow. I detect a pattern there, since conditions were similar last year, when we upgraded our antennas on the roof of the Richardson Building. Next year, all antenna work will take place in the summer, with temperatures in the 80's.

1. To remove the VHF antenna from the railing and lay it on the roof temporarily.

2. To disconnect the Heliax cable from the railing. This was quickly accomplished.

3. This is where things became interesting. The plan was to bolt a set of 4 clamps and pipes, which Yori fabricated, to the tower. One pair of clamps was to be attached to the very top, the second pair at the bottom of the top section. The problem was that the tower bolts were badly rusted, from steam venting from a nearby pipe on the roof. Thanks to Barrett VE4ABA's ingenuity, (and some colourful language) the bolts finally came out, to be replaced with longer bolts to hold the clamping mechanism. The clamps and pipes held the antenna about 2 feet away from the tower.

4. To lift the antenna up the tower, and clamp it on. This was no problem.

5. Estimate how much Heliax cable was required for the new location, and push the excess into the radio room. Yori then cut the cable to size and reattached the connector.

While the tower crew moved the antenna, Yori was busy testing the radios, duplexers and controller. He had the best job of all, since the radio room was toasty warm. Everything checked out very well.

Once everything was reinstalled and tested, the intermittent noise was still there. We think it is something within the plant, such as a ballast or a PLC, or ???. Hopefully it will be identified and eliminated, shortly.

The installation was a success. The range of the repeater has been increased a bit. We were able to talk to Gary VE4KGB and Barrett while we were driving south on Highway 8 up to the Stonewall cutoff on the way home.

Unfortunately, we were not able to get any free samples of Crown Royal, while we were at the Diageo plant.

Thanks to Barrett VE4ABA, for getting us access to the Diageo site, to Derek VE4HAY and Paula VE4MHZ who acted as chauffeurs, to Yori VE4ACX for testing the equipment, and to Gord VE4GLS, Barrett VE4ABA and Dick VE4HK, who moved the antenna despite the inclement weather (and never complained, not once)

VE4MBR Update
By Bill, VE4UB

Selkirk VE4MBR/VE4SSS We have now completed the installation of a taller mast and replaced the feed line with LMR-400 for the tri-band Diamond vertical repeater antenna. The work was completed by Duncan VE4UI on the tower and Ron VE4QE on the ground. Weather was excellent for tower work, cold and windy! The results from the changes are well worth the effort. The Link antenna was also installed to link Selkirk with MRS and Pinetree for additional coverage. The UHF section of the repeater should be commissioned in the next couple of weeks and the 23 cm section will be added this winter. Plans for this winter are to get the autopatches working on VHF and UHF and installation of an IRLP link. The two Scom 7K repeater controllers will also be upgraded to enhance operation. Negotiations are ongoing with the City of Selkirk and our emergency preparedness. News should be available on this front soon. Brad VE4PI is also the Director of Communications for the city which enhances our position. Our new home is in the old RCMP city office and our repeaters are located in the secure interview room. I wish to thank all of the hams involved in making a success of our operation. Without the hard work of Rick VE4RA, Ron VE4QE, Duncan VE4UI and Brad VE4PI we would still have pieces in Eugene's VE4NME garage

The VE4MBR repeater located in the City of Selkirk on 147.060 MHz positive offset and tone access of 127.3 Hz. is capable of linking into the VE4MIL repeater (owned and operated by the Manitoba Repeater Society). To access the VE4MBR <-> VE4MIL link, simply issue the 403 command to bring up the link. To drop the link issue the 430 command. After 5 minutes of no carrier the link will automatically drop. During this testing phase the link will normally be in a off condition. This repeater is fully open for all hams to use. Signal reports and coverage reports are encouraged.

RAC Regional Director Report
By Bj. Madsen - VE5FX

There are a couple of major items coming out of RAC, on which you will be receiving more, detailed information.

The good:

RAC has obtained insurance coverage, from a firm by the name of AXA which has insured Quebec Amateurs for many years. This insurance will provide $5 000 000 in liability coverage for RAC members and for qualified Amateur Radio Clubs. The insurance is a benefit of membership, not an extra cost item, for RAC members. It evidently meets the requirements of the CBC for repeater hosting on transmission towers. It will make it unnecessary, for participating clubs, to have (expensive) liability insurance for repeater installations, public events, etc, etc. This could be a significant saving for clubs. The participating clubs will have to be incorporated for this to work. Otherwise, the club members will carry the liability personally. (And, if RAC members, have their own $5M liability coverage, of course)

The inevitable:

RAC has been forced to change the membership fee structure, to become effective with the coming of the new year. The new fee structure will be:

Membership in RAC (no TCA)	$44.95
Subscription to TCA (no membership in RAC)	$44.95
Both membership and TCA	$49.95

This change was required by Heritage Canada in order to continue RAC's qualification for favourable mailing treatment, which is a significant budget factor. The old membership cost of $39.95 has been in effect, unchanged, for many years. If RAC had continued with this structure, the Heritage Canada benefit would have been lost. For the past few years, it has NOT covered the actual cost of membership, and had to be augmented by sales of merchandise and books to cover RAC's operating costs. Certainly, the benefit derived from the liability insurance will, by itself, more than offset the increase in membership fee

Linking for Dummies
By Derek, VE4HAY

A number of members have been asking how to control the links on the Manitoba Repeater Society linked repeater system. So this article is to show everyone how simple the linking can be. First we need to establish some ground rules. Once we understand the ground rules below, the rest is simple for 95% of the users and the commands they will be issuing to the system.

1. We need to believe that all the links are in good working order as published from time to time in the various guides or manuals that are distributed. (look for a schematic diagram of the system elsewhere in this issue)
2. We need to understand that a repeater does not represent a controller and vice-versa. When I mention the VE4WPG controller, I am not talking about the VE4WPG repeater, They are two different pieces of equipment at the same location
3. We need to understand which repeaters are attached to the backbone normally and which ones are not.
4. We need to understand which links are normally attached to the back bone and which are not.
5. We need to understand where inter-ties exist between one system and another.
6. We need to understand the difference between local commands and remote commands

Item 1 - The diagram.
Hopefully there is room in the newsletter to have the diagram attached. If not then please look for it on the MRS web site, or in the next newsletter. The diagrams shows all MRS repeaters, links and inter-ties both current and planned for in the future. In a perfect world, we would have paid employees who would travel the province every few days fixing, repairing and maintaining the sites. But as this is a hobby and the executive members are limited to what they an do at any given day by their families. Things tend to break or not work properly all the time. But we try our best. So for now, lets just agreed that the system is working perfectly and everything is as displayed.

Item 2 - Understanding the diagram
The Controllers - The double line boxes with the numbers in them are the controllers located at specific sites. The site the controllers are associated with is, the repeater that hangs immediately off the controller. i.e.. - the #45 controller is at the VE4WPG repeater site, and the #42 controller is at the VE4MIL site.
The Backbone - Not every site has the same type of equipment, But on the diagram the controllers are assigned numbers and are connected by the bi-directional double lines that go from controller to controller. This we call the backbone. This is what holds the system together. Without this you could not talk from one end to the other. The backbone is a full duplex system, where it receives and transmits at the same time. This means that while a conversation is going from #45 to #46 a totally different conservation could be going from #46 to #45. Complicated, yes, but don't worry about it. Just accept it as the way it works. The backbone is normally always connected to pass traffic from one end to the other.
Repeaters - Some of the repeaters (radios) are at the controller site and are connected by wires. Other repeaters are connected to the controller by links (other radios). This is important to understand which are which, as they take different commands to make them work properly. The repeaters that are directly connected are shown by lines without arrows, while the linked repeaters are shown with lines with arrows. For both of these the connection is semi-duplex. Only one conversation can happen at a time. They are either transmitting or receiving, not both.

Item 3 - Normally connected repeaters
Each controller on the system can handle a number of functions at the same time. By this I mean they can process more than one audio conversation at the same time. They can be mixed together or kept separate and routed out the repeater port or link ports. The choice is up to the user. But to keep everything simple for the users, your executive has set the system up with some repeaters pre-connected so you do not have to worry about entering the commands to establish the connection. All repeaters associated with the controller except the VE4WPG repeater are connected on a normal basis. This is not to say that someone, could have disconnect the repeater prior to you using it. For repeaters that are connected directly to the controller (not through a link) you will hear a be-bop as a courtesy tone when you un-key the mic. This signals a connected repeater. The reason for not normally connecting the VE4WPG repeaters is due to the high traffic that exists on that repeater.

Item 4 - Normally connected links.
As I stated before the backbone linking is normally always connected. The other links to that exist are the ones that go to remote repeaters (repeaters not at the controller site). These links have been normally set to always connected as well. The one exceptions is the VE4EMB link form VE4FAl, This one is hot-linked. This means that it is always connected and can not be disconnected.

Item 5 - Inter-ties
Where the Manitoba Repeater Society system connects to another system (like the Lake of the Woods System) there is

an inter-tie point. This is like a switch it is either on or off. Connected or not connected. There is no normal for this switch. Sometimes it is set to normally on and other times it is normally off. You will have to test to see which state it is in. The Manitoba Repeater Society is part of the Pine Tree Inter-tie, which provides linking from Brandon to Dryden. We also link to other systems (Triple S Communication group, Dauphin Amateur Radio Club, and the Brandon Amateur Radio Club), plans are in the works to link to the Winkler Repeater group, the Manitoba Amateur Radio Museum, and to some private repeaters. All these inter-ties will either be normally connected or not. Each group decides how they want the system to be in a normal situation. If one wants it off then it is off. You can always connect it by command when you require it.

Item 6 - local vs. remote

Most of the repeaters on the system are made by one manufacture or are set-up to mimic the commands of the one manufacturer. But how do you tell one controller to perform a command and not all the controllers. This is done by the use of a local prefix or a remote prefix. i.e. you want to tell the controller to disconnect the repeater from the backbone so you can have a QSO locally without it going over the entire system. The command for this is 460. But if you were to issue that all controllers would disconnect the repeater associated with their site. Not what you really want to do. You want only one controller to accept the command. So what we have done is establish a prefix for local controllers and for remote controllers. To issue a command to the local controller, you need to prefix the command with the *, while remote controllers are prefixed with the #. What this means is that when you enter a command that starts with the *, the local controller will intercept the command and perform the function you require. But if the prefix is a #, the local controller will ignore the command and pass it out the link ports for another controller to perform. But, now we have another problem, How do we specify which remote controller to send the command to. This is done by the address of the remote controller. You will notice that the controllers (in Manitoba) all have numbers starting at 40 and ending at 49. The controller in Ontario begin at 30 and go up from there. 4's for the VE4's and 3's for the VE3's. Kind of simple right. So to send a command to a certain remote controller, (i.e.. The controller associated with the VE4MIL repeater) you would prefix it with #42 and then issue the command.

Palomar Controller commands
Reset to Normal State - Prefix, 500

	ON	OFF
Link # 1	401	410
Link # 2	402	420
Link # 3	403	430
Link # 4	404	440
Repeater	406	460

Telemetry

	CW	Voice
Controller Status	411	411
Repeater status	04D	099A
L1 status	71A	711A
L2 status	72A	722A
L3 status	73A	733A
L4 status	74A	744A
Time (12 hour)	861	8661
Time (24 hour)	862	8662
Date	863	8663
Day of week	864	
Start local Identifier	018	
Start remote Identifier		019
Location	09A	

Remember to use the proper Prefix

Local Controllers with a *
Remote Controllers with their Prefix , (i.e... #47)

The codes that 95% of the users will need.

In Winnipeg using VE4WPG, calling outside Winnipeg	*406
In Winnipeg using VE4WPG, resetting controller	*500
Outside Winnipeg, calling VE4WPG	#45,406
Outside Winnipeg, resetting VE4WPG	#45,500

The fun part

OK, so now we have established the ground rules and we have an understanding of them. If we look at what is normally connected and what is not, you will soon see that everything is connected on the Manitoba Repeater Society system except the VE4WPG repeater. So if you are out in the rural area and accessing any repeater that is part of the MRS system, you will be able to hold a conversation with anyone else on the system as long as they are not using the VE4WPG repeater. This means that a person on the VE4MIL repeater can talk to a person on the VE4CDN repeater without issuing any commands. But what happens if you want to talk into the VE4WPG repeater from another repeater

or vise-versa. You will need to connect the VE4WPG repeater to the backbone. This done by issuing the proper prefix and the 406 command.
*406 or #45, 406
Once you are done you would issue the disconnect command as follows.
*460, or #45, 460
But what happens if the controller you are accessing is not in it's normal mode. You would issue the reset to normal command prefix, 500
*500 or #45, 500.
You could simply do this as compared to the 460 command described above for the situation above. So now you have the most basic fundamentals on using the Manitoba Repeater Society link repeater system. From here you can get into more complicated commands. In the figure above are some of the other basic commands for turning links on and off and telemetry commands. (Please note only some repeaters respond in voice, while others respond in CW). So there you have it. How to use the MRS system or Linking for Dummies. Give it a try. It's your system, please use it.. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact any executive member, who will be happy to guide you through it. - enjoy

MRS Swap & Shop
By Dick, VE4HK

I have received a number of questions about the swap and shop on the Internet. Here are some answers

- the website is ve4sss.ca/swapnshop.html
- I take additions and deletions on the swap and shop net Thursday and Sunday, over the Internet at any time, neatly hand written and given to me in person, or over the telephone. If it is a long listing, I prefer to receive additions over the Internet.
- I upload the Swap and Shop to VE4UB every Sunday evening, immediately after the Swap and Shop net. Bill normally updates the listing Monday morning.
- I would only upload a supplementary Swap and Shop other than Sunday evening, if there is a major change to the listings. I decide what constitutes a major change.
- I decide what is suitable to list on the swap and shop.

If you have any questions or concerns, you can talk to me on VE4WPG repeater, telephone 256-3143, or see me at WARC meetings, or most Saturday morning at MacDonalds for coffee.

Finding the Source of Repeater Interference
By Gord, VE4GLS and Paula, VE4MHZ

You're monitoring or trying to have a QSO on your favourite repeater and you hear a bunch of noise coming in that is interfering with the repeater's normal operation. The repeater doesn't seem to be working because it has timed out due to a continuous carrier on it's input. What can you do to help find the source? Lots!

Repeater interference comes in many forms; malicious interference, accidental interference and intermod. Intermod is the hardest to track down as it is usually a combination of multiple outputs mixing together and resulting in an intermittent signal on the input of the repeater. It usually doesn't sound like anything particular, just noise.

We're not going to talk about it here, as the procedure to find this type of signal is quite complicated and time consuming. However, every one of you can help find malicious or accidental interference quite easily.

The first thing to do is put the repeater's input frequency into your VFO without an offset. Almost all repeaters are programmed into radios using the repeater's output frequency and an offset. The offset is either positive '+' or negative '-'. Almost all 2m repeaters use a standard 600 Hz offset. The input frequency is then calculated using the input frequency and adding or subtracting the offset. For instance VE4WPG is on frequency 147.390 MHz with a positive offset. So VE4WPG's input would be

147.390 MHz
+ .600 MHz offset
147.990 MHz

By moving to this simplex frequency, you can do several things.

If the repeater has timed out you can still use it's output frequency as simplex (without an offset), however, you will only hear responses from other stations within simplex range of your station. In the city, there shouldn't be a problem to get someone to relay information to or from you if required. This works well if your radio has a "reverse" button, you can quickly check the interfering signal without playing with the dial. If the repeater is still transmitting, it might be wise to use another frequency (usually something like 146.52 MHz) on simplex to arrange with other stations, or use your ARES backup communications plan.

The most important thing you can do is see if you are receiving the interfering signal and note it's signal strength, time you heard it and your location. Most radios have an S-meter that give you a nice graph to show how strong the signal is.

If your station is not receiving the signal at all on the repeater's input frequency, you know the offending transmitter isn't near your station. This type of report helps us eliminate sections from our search area.

If your station is getting a full strength signal, then either the offending transmitter is in your neighbourhood or this transmitter is using a higher power. Usually a higher-powered transmitter will be interfering by accident because long-term continuous transmit for most of our amateur radios usually means radio meltdown. It could be a stuck PTT on a microphone; the amateur's cat has fallen asleep on the mike because it was in a nice warm sunbeam or whatever. It's good to track these down quickly as the amateur who owns the offending radio is usually grateful as it saves him a lot of radio repairs in the near future.

If you have a rotateable directional antenna (yagi, quagi, quad) you can try to find the direction of the interference by rotating the antenna 360 degrees and taking a signal reading every 10 degrees or so. Do this at least a couple of times to insure accuracy. Then you can chart the results and find the direction from which the signal is strongest. If there is another station that can do the same from some distance away, the signal can be triangulated on a map. You draw a line from each station representing the direction from where the signal was received strongest. The point where the two lines intersect is the area most likely where the interfering signal originates. The more stations that can give an accurate signal direction report the more accurate the triangulation.

If you do not have a rotatable antenna, your signal reports can be quite useful for tracking the interference as well. Take a signal reading every few minutes and report on the arranged frequency (repeater output?) the initial signal strength and any changes, up or down. This may help determine if the interfering source is moving and possibly what direction.

If the signal is full scale you can further reduce the signal to your receiver by removing the antenna from your receiver or adding attenuation. If you still have a substantial signal present without a feedline connected the source must be very close, usually within a few hundred meters. An attenuator can be helpful when using a directional antenna to further triangulate a source that is very close by. Most attenuators drop the signal –10 to –60 dB and can be added in the coax close to the receiver.

Interference hunting using a portable radio

(Continued in next issue!)

Winnipeg Senior Citizens Radio Club News

by Adam, VE4SN

What a beautiful two months (namely October and November) we have all experienced this year! It's hard to believe that I had to mow my lawn again in mid-November and then just eight days later it was necessary to shovel the snow off my driveway for the first time! In the words of the comedian Yakoff Smirnoff… "What a country!!!"

Thankfully Halloween passed our area uneventfully and only forty six youngsters showed up for "Trick or Treat" even though we bought enough goodies for three times that many.

Thanksgiving, as usual, was an overeat event but it was a nice family gathering. Now the festive lights of Christmas are beginning to glow on many homes and we gear ourselves for the "tis better to give than to receive" season. It is my hope that the age-old message of "Peace on Earth to Men of Good Will!" will be heard loud and clear all over this world of ours!

Because I missed submitting a write-up last month, I have to report on two breakfast gatherings. October saw our group enjoy breakfast in renovated surroundings at the Garden City location. New rugs, new tables and new paint job were very evident. Twenty three persons showed up and Bill Shipley VE4BYL won the free breakfast. In November, we had to defer breakfast to the 18th because our usual date fell on the 11th which of course was Remembrance Day. Twenty seven showed up and Dorothy Flight VE4KEB was the recipient of the free meal.

By the time most of you read this article, our Basic class should be finished, the exams written and hopefully, several new hams have joined our ranks. More on this in the next newsletter including the names and call signs of those who made it! Just maybe we can get a CW class started early in the new year but it all depends on how many people would be interested in attending. Anyone who wishes to learn Morse code, please get in touch with Sandy, VE4SZ.

Ticket sales are going fast for our annual Christmas Luncheon to be held on Tuesday, December 7th at 12 noon. As usual, it promises to be a gala affair with a complete turkey dinner and entertainment provided by our own Intermods. We plan to have raffles, door prizes and of course a visit from Santa Clause himself. To get your tickets please get in touch with Gil Frederick VE4AG or call VE4WSC at 233-3122. Plan to attend.

Finally, remember the General Meeting for the purpose of electing a new Executive and Executive Board for 2005. Mark December 15th on your calendar. The meeting starts at 10: 00 am and there's a very good chance it will be held downstairs in the City of Winnipeg Retirees Clubrooms

where our 20th birthday party was held in 2003. We hope this draws a lot of members to this meeting. Incidentally, I'm still looking for a candidate to fill the office of Treasurer. If you feel you are capable of doing the job or know someone who can, please give me a call at 339-3316. Thanks and 73!

CARAB October 2004 Report
RAC Midwest Director Bj Madsen, VE4FX

The pre-CARAB meeting was held on Wednesday, October 27 with the full meeting with Industry Canada being held on the following day. Industry Canada is not moving with speed or urgency on any of the items that are so near and dear to the hearts of Canadian Amateur Radio operators, but they are moving - slowly - with the constant prodding received from RAC Vice President of Regulatory Affairs, Jim Dean (VE3IQ). The primary items which were discussed were:

1. BPL

- (Broadcast over Power Lines) is an issue of considerable interest to Industry Canada. Trials are still taking place at Sault St. Marie and the Ramada Inn in Cornwall has been doing in-house trials on a system within their building. Industry Canada will be moving to the public input process early in 2005, through the Gazette process, soliciting input on BPL from the public.

2. Tower Consultation

- Professor Townsend's report is being finalized (he received over 1000 responses) and should be available early in 2005. Industry Canada's best advice on Amateur towers continues to be that hams should establish a positive dialogue with their community before erecting towers. This translates to mean that IC is not anxious to be called in to settle disputes.

3. Reciprocal Operating Agreements

- Industry Canada will be suggesting that Canada should be willing to allow short term (up to one year) operation by foreign hams on the strength of their own license. Beyond that, foreign hams should obtain Canadian certification (write the exam). It is hoped that other countries will then undertake to treat visiting Canadians in the same fashion.

Unanswered - what to do about Foundation Licensees from Great Britain, as there is no comparable license in Canada. Should they have some sort of operating permission when operating in Canada?

4. Morse Code Proposal

- The Gazette period generated about 150 responses, which will be tabulated and summarized during the next two weeks. This summary will appear on the IC WEB site. Then, a decision will be made by Industry Canada on what direction to take. Much of it seems to hinge on whether changes will require regulatory changes, as this process is very long and tedious. The worst-case scenario in terms of time frame for a decision will be next summer. Maybe it will happen sooner. In the meantime, examination pass marks remain at 60%, the existing exam will be used and hams who wish to have access to HF are advised to obtain their 5 wpm Morse certification.

- Will the Morse requirement be dropped? Probably.
- Will the exam pass mark be increased? Probably.
- Will the exam question bank change (soon)? Probably not.
- Will Morse proficiency continue to be an avenue to HF access, even though it is no longer required? Probably.

5. Callsign Proposal

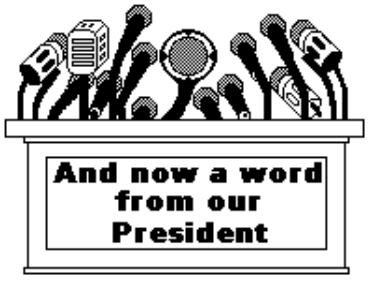
- The 2X4 callsigns will, in all likelihood, be treated like special event callsigns, available for defined short periods only, not as permanent allocations. The Industry Canada database is not configured to record permanent 2X4 callsigns.

6. Designated Examiners

- are reminded that they have to renew their status every two years and that they must be using the current exam generator, as available from the Industry Canada WEB site. I will be calling the examiners in VE4 & VE5 in the near future for a brief chat.

Membership Report
By Roy, VE4EN

With an annual average of approximately 150 paid memberships, 20 Life and Special members, we continue to have a very loyal group of members supporting the club. As membership dues are annually for each fiscal year beginning in January, there are at least 50 that have paid for 2005 in advance. I would also like to encourage all members receiving our newsletter by snail mail, to call me at 669-1355 and give me your email address . We would like to lower our mailing costs, and most of you I'm sure have email. For those who have not renewed your membership yet, please use the membership application enclosed. Thanks for your continued support.



President's Report
by Ed, VE4EAR

Once more we find ourselves facing that hectic season, namely antenna installation. You know the time of the year between the first frost and the first major dump of snow. There is so much to do; installing those antennas we built/bought during the summer months and never had a chance to install, putting in a new ground rod before the ground freezes more than 2 feet deep, finding storage in the garage for all those flea market goodies acquired during the fall.

How many of us have used the phrase "I am just putting up the Christmas lights dear!" as an opportunity to climb on our roofs to check/install or repair our antenna system. How many of you forgot the Christmas lights afterwards?

Once again it has been a busy year with the MRS. We have seen several repeaters upgraded, new sites added, sites lost, and plenty of maintenance on existing equipment.

Several amateurs have become part of our new mentoring program and we feel it can be classified a success. In the program, members that have expressed an interest in learning more about repeaters have been invited to accompany the technical committee to various sites and assist in installing or maintaining equipment. This hands on approach is a wonderful learning opportunity and we look forward to more involvement from members in the coming years. As always, you don't need to be an expert to give us a hand, so don't be shy about volunteering for any of the repeater maintenance or installation projects. Its always a great opportunity to learn as well as make new friends.

Look through the rest of this newsletter; I am sure you will find plenty to keep you interested. I am sure Derek Hay would also be extremely grateful for any articles for upcoming editions.

Just when you think things couldn't get any busier, how about adding one more item to your "to-do" list. The end of the year also means its time to renew your MRS membership for another year. For your convenience, there is a form included with this newsletter. The monies generated by membership fees account for virtually 100% of our income and are essential if we are to maintain or improve our repeater network. If this is important to you, I hope you will consider re-newing your membership for another year. For those that have already done so, a great big Thank you!

On behalf of the MRS executive and myself, I want to extend to everyone a sincere wish for peace, happiness, health and prosperity this holiday season and throughout 2005..

Editors Ramblings
By Derek VE4HAY

Dear Santa,

I have been extra good this year. I have joined all the local HAM groups, and kept up with my membership fees. I have also renewed my membership in Radio Amateurs of Canada, our national organization. I have attended the flea markets and entered into the 50/50 draws. I even went to the International Ham fest and the Manitoba Amateur Radio Museum Ham fest. I participate in the weekly nets as best as I can, as wells as, the morning nets. I have attended all the Winnipeg Amateur Radio club meetings and the Manitoba Repeater Society ones. I even did a small presentation at the latest Ham radio class about repeaters and about RAC. I have welcomed new calls I hear to the air, and greeted out of provinces calls with a hearty welcome, Can I be of assistance? I even give my just read TCA magazines to new HAMs and or leave them in public places for others to read. Let's not forget that I have put out 13 newsletters this year. All in all Santa, I have been a very good Amateur Radio Operator.

I am not asking for much this year. I don't need the new Icom IC-7800, nor do I need the Mosley Tri band beam. All I really want is for the current sunspot cycle to turn around so that my friends who DX can have some fun again. I want my friends who are trying to get their CW endorsement to be able to easily pass their test. I want my friends who work on all the repeaters to have a year with no breakdowns. I want my friends at WARC to be able to make it to the meetings to see each other. I want my friends at ARES to have an un-eventful year (but still have fun with exercises). I want my friends who are looking for that rare country to finally get make contact. I want all my friends to be able to experience what HF is all about. I want Industry Canada to finally decide on the CW issue, so we can all get on with our lives. I want digital radio to come into bloom in Amateur Radio (voice & data) And finally I want all my friends to enjoy their hobby, as I know they do.

73,

VE4HAY