

THE OVMRC RAMBLER

Volume 37, Number 3 - March 1994



The Class of '94 - an enthusiastic, eager group of future amateurs OVMRC Amateur Radio Course Successful!

The OVMRC's 1994 Amateur Radio Course is considered to be "one of the very best" and highly successful - by the participants who have faithfully attended the course every Tuesday evening at the Museum of Science and Technology. They have studied electronics, morse code, governing legislation and all of the other aspects required to become 'good' amateur operators.

Rather than have the course instructors or the Rambler's editor write a feature story extolling the virtues of the course, we asked the course participants to provide their thoughts about the course - and here is what they had to say.

Paul Brier...

This amateur radio course is a stepping stone for aspiring ham operators. This course covers more than what you need to know to pass the DOC examination. The course covers the theory aspects of this exciting hobby and our instructors have kept the course interesting with an array of demonstrations ranging from capacitors to power supplies and beyond. The students are taking the course for a variety of reasons from packet and satellite message sending to rag chewing with friends to

communicating around the world. We cannot forget the importance of emergency commuciations in the event of a fire, flood or earthquake as was the case recently in Los Angeles, or contacting the Coast Guard when your boat is in trouble. This is an interesting hobby with as many facets as there are enthusiasts who enjoy it. To the instructors of the OVMRC Amateur Radio Course, Bob Shaw, John Moffat, Jerry Wells, Brice Whitman and Kevin Jones, keep up the good
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The Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club

RAMBLER

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Treasurer: Richard Adams, VE3EIT, 749-2619
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Field day: Allan Barnes, VE2TYJ, 746-5994
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Historical: Mike Beausoleil, VE3BGP, 739-8871
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Ramblerites

Contributors to this issue:

Students of the OVMRC Radio Course
Ed LeBlanc, VE3VLF
Industry Canada Newsletter
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Mark Your Calendar!

Next general meeting:

Thursday, March 17, 1994, at 1930 hours in the auditorium of the National Museum of Science & Technology. It will be Homebrew night.

Next executive meeting:

Thursday, March 24, 1994, at 1900 hours in the volunteer room at the National Museum of Science & Technology.

Deadline for the next issue of the Rambler:

Thursday, March 24, 1994.

Affiliated clubs

The OVMRC exchanges bulletins with the following organizations:

Augusta Amateur Radio Association, Augusta, ME
Border City Radio Club, Windsor, ON
Chatham-Kent Amateur Radio Club Inc., Ridgeway, ON
Calgary Amateur Radio Association, Calgary, AB
Halifax Amateur Radio Club, Halifax, NS
Heritage Amateur Radio Club, Cobourg, ON
Kingston ARC, Kingston, ON
London Amateur Radio Club, London, ON
Ottawa Amateur Radio Club, Ottawa, ON
Pioneer Amateur Radio Club, Nepean, ON
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Sudbury Amateur Radio Club, Sudbury, ON
Saskatoon Amateur Radio Club, Saskatoon, SK
Thousand Islands Amateur Radio Association, Prescott, ON
West Island Amateur Radio Club Inc., Dorval, PQ

Sponsors

The OVMRC provides bulletins to the following organizations for their past support of our activities:
Bytown Marine, Ottawa, ON
Kenwood Electronics Canada Inc., Mississauga, ON
Seaway Communications Co., Cornwall, ON

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Ramblings

Wise words from our President, Jerry Wells, VE3CDS



Here we are into the last month of winter with spring just around the corner. I do believe from all reports that this winter has been one of the coldest in many a year. At last we can see the end and the prospect of warmer weather are in the cards. I'm glad we made it once again. The February trip to Vancouver certainly was a pleasant break - no winter out there in VE7 land...Ah well, to the task at hand. These Ramblings are directed to the many students on our club radio course that are coming down to the final stages of learning and will soon become full fledged members of the most gratifying hobby in the world - amateur radio!

The group that has hung on and worked their way through the many subjects so ably taught by Bob, VE3SUY, John, VE3NJ, Brice, VE3EDR and Kevin, VE3RKJ. Subjects such as D.C. and A.C. theory, transmitters, receivers, transistors, vacuum tubes, regulations, all kinds of interesting and intriguing info on antennas and propagation and ham bands and interference and mastery of the morse code, many at the 5 word per minute level and some at the 12 word per minute level. I think that many of the students don't realize how much they have learned.

I really enjoy working with the students and, in particular, as we approach the end of the classroom

teaching, the opportunity to demonstrate the on air aspects of being a radio amateur. A bit of this has been done throughout the course and the students in many cases have looked on as John or Brice or Bob demonstrated various aspects of operating. We soon will be giving all of our students the opportunity to operate the rig at VE3JW and experience the thrill of making a contact with another amateur. We will show our new amateurs the different bands that we are able to cover from the museum station and let them get hands on experience to enable them to get their own stations on the air with a good understanding of what its all about. We will bring them up to speed on operating procedures on the bands which will help to dispell those first time jitters on the air. This is the fun time on the course for all of us.

Every year I say to myself that maybe next year I won't get so involved with the teaching of amateur radio to those that want to get into it. In retrospect I find that the enjoyment in seeing new amateurs pass the requirements to become a radio amateur has become a most gratifying aspect of what I do in this hobby.

To all my new amateurs I say, "Enjoy the hobby in whatever way you choose"- the choice is yours !

Class of '94

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work showing aspiring amateurs this wonderful hobby.

L. Cunningham...

It is an excellent course and although I do not have any technical knowledge I really feel that with the excellent instruction I am receiving I will be able to pass the exam and be on the air in April. Thank you for all your professional help !

Sue Welsh...

I find the radio amateur class very interesting. It has attracted a wide cross-section of people from all walks of life. They are all fired up with enthusiasm for a common goal - communicating with others. There is a cooperative aspect to the class that I like; we are not competing with one another, but rather we are working together to achieve something worthwhile. I have heard it said that one can "read a book" to prepare for the amateur radio exam. While this may be true for some, I know that if I did not come to class regularly, listen to the lectures, and write the practice tests, I would not be able to do it on my own. I really appreciate the time and dedication shown by our teachers. They are devoting considerable time to us which speaks volumes for the radio amateur tradition of volunteer work for the benefit of others. Learning to be proficient with morse code is, for me, the most time consuming part of the exercise. I can think up hundreds of reasons every week for not practicing mu code! Progress seemed very slow until I realized that the speed kept increasing. Now when I hear morse at the lower speed it seems easier. I console myself with the adage "Nothing worth doing is ever easy!"

Marc D. Charron...

I find this course to be very intensive. All of our teachers are experienced amateurs and know what they are doing. Keep up the good work.

Tim Terrill, VA3TLT...

I feel I can speak with authority as to the quality of the material and presentation of the 93-94 OVMRC Amateur Radio Course as I have successfully completed a similar course in Toronto in 92-93. While I have been licenced since April, 1993, I have taken this course with the view of upgrading my technical skills, gaining more understanding and attaining my advanced certificate. This course has more than met my expectations. The instructors are dedicated, well qualified, knowledgeable and most helpful. The course material is detailed, well presented and easy to follow. The aim of the course clearly is to educate the student and provide him/her with a solid understanding of all aspects of the basic amateur radio hobby as opposed to simply passing an ISC examination.

Fernand Charron...

Ham radio was a teenage dream for me that eventually got lost in the shuffle of earning a living and raising a family. Now that I am retired, I am pursuing two dreams - sailing to the Bahamas and the Caribbean with my wife and getting my ham licence (advanced certificate no less). I find the OVMRC course teachers to be knowledgeable, friendly, helpful and very dedicated. It would be easy to memorize the answers to the questions in the DOC bank but, personally, I need to know the theory and principles behind the questions to ensure that not only do I know the answers but that I

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Class of '94

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understand what I am doing as well; there are tricks also in learning morse code the right way. Thank you Bob, John, Brice and Jerry for getting and keeping me on the right track week after week.

Dan Reardon, VE3GUU...

The OVMRC amateur radio course has been an experience. I took a course over ten years ago and, I must say, this has been one of the best taught

courses I have attended. I am sure if an university or college was teaching this course they could not have been up to our teachers' standards. John, Bob, Brice and Jerry are dedicated amateurs and today that is hard to find in any field. They are willing to spend time with you, one on one, to help correct and/or solve problems. I have learned a lot for this course. I would not hesitate to recommend the OVMRC course to any prospective ham.

OVMRC Flea Market

It's going to be the biggest and best amateur radio flea market Ottawa has ever seen! The date for the OVMRC's Flea Market is fast approaching and so is the tempo of preparation activities.

The date and location of the flea market is Saturday, May 14th at the St. Laurent Arena on Miron Street. The Rambler will include a map of the immediate area in the April issue to assist in getting to the arena.

Staging the flea market in an arena will ensure both commercial and private vendors have lots of room to display their wares as well as having plenty of space for amateurs to tour and inspect each table. Possibly more important, there will be lots of space for amateurs to visit with one another and compare the bargains they have acquired.

Lorraine, VE3VAT, is looking for volunteers to help set-up tables at the arena. Additionally, volunteers are needed to help take down the tables at the close of the flea market. If you can help, please contact Lorraine, VE3VAT.

COMTECH '94 Tickets

A very sincere thank you to Connelly Business Exhibitions Inc. producers of COMTECH '94 at the Civic Centre April 26 & 27, who have graciously given the OVMRC a block of tickets to their show. The admission tickets, valued at \$12 each, will be given as door prizes at our regular meeting on March 17th. COMTECH features the very latest in computers and software.

New Printer For Rambler

The OVMRC extends a big thank you to Manfred Kahle of Techpro Electronics in Kanata for facilitating the clubs acquisition of a new Texas Instrument Microwriter printer. Manfred provided the printer at his wholesale cost thus saving the club a considerable sum of money. Again, thank you Manfred.

Some modern women show a lot of style
- and some modern styles show a lot
of women!

Minutes

OVMRC Regular Meeting
17 February, 1994.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Jerry Wells, VE3CDS, at 1945 hours.

Visitors

Six visitors were introduced and acknowledged - Joe Monkhouse, VE3TCG, Tom Bristow, VA3BC, Lloyd, VE3CNN, Buz Nixon, VA3BUZ, Danny Lainez, VA3DLM, and Chris, VA3GAR.

Guest Speaker

Jerry announced that the advertised guest speaker Gerry King had recently undergone surgery and was not able to fulfill his speaking commitment. In his stead, Jerry spoke on the early growth of amateur radio and made a number of observations on the hobby.

Jerry said he has little time for self-appointed critics on the air. If they object to what they hear they would do well to use the "off" switch on their set.

New amateurs often ask how they can learn about operating procedures and etiquette. Jerry's response is to listen to good operators on the air.

Speaking of good operating practices, he reminded everyone to be courteous on the air; when using repeaters let other amateurs in; respect your fellow amateurs and remember when you transmit a signal everyone can hear you and if you have a criticism use the telephone to discuss it. Above all, remember amateur radio is a hobby to be enjoyed by all participants.

The speaker was thanked for a most interesting and enlightening presentation by Larry, VE3WEH.

Meeting Programs

The meeting programs for the balance of the year is as follows:

March- Homebrew Night

April- Meet the new amateurs night

May- An exhibit of member HF, VHF and UHF mobile installations to take place in the museum's parking lot, to be followed by a talk on "Lightning" by Dr. Terry McComb of NRC and Bill Wilson, VE3NR

June- Annual meeting and election of officers. Techno days week-end. Annual Field Day week-end.

July- A joint amateur radio day and picnic with the Smiths Falls ARC.

Motion

Dan Doctor, VE3XDD moved, seconded by Steve Middleton, VE3RUU, that the Rambler supplies budget be increased by \$500 to facilitate the purchase of a laser printer.

Chuck King, VE3PDK moved, seconded by Hans Den Berg, VE3REL, to amend the motion to read that the club authorize the executive to purchase a printer to a total value of \$1552.49.

Following discussion, the amended motion was carried by a large majority.

Repeater Map

Len, VE3AWT, a new amateur, received congratulation from the President for preparing an Eastern Ontario repeater map and list of local nets. The map and list will be reproduced and distributed to club members.

Announcements

The OVMRC Class of '92 is planning its second reunion dinner at
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Phil Barrett...

Where Is He Now?

Do you remember Phil Barrett? He was, for many years, a well known Ottawa amateur radio operator. He spent thirty-some years in public service fire safety, first with the Air Force and later with the Canadian Penitentiary Service before his 1985 retirement. Phil relocated to British Columbia, first to Burnaby and in 1991 to the Cariboo area.

Phil became interested in amateur radio in 1932 at the age of 12. A friend put together a one-tube radio receiver, and Phil was off and running. However, he did not pursue his amateur radio licence until 1947, receiving it in 1950.

Phil Barrett, VE7MJY, is one of possibly a dozen ham operators between 70 mile and Lac La Hache. His shack is a small cabin separated from the family home which is shadowed by a 92 foot antenna tower that helps

put him in contact with "anywhere in the world, depending on propagation conditions." Barrett's rig is modern and efficient. He estimates that to replace his radio equipment would cost around \$20,000. He says, "it has taken me a long time to put all my radio equipment together."

Phil has an extensive collection of QSL cards. He is really proud of a bright red card he has received from an operator in Albania, the poorest and most tightly closed nation in eastern Europe. Last year was in touch with the first amateur radio station on the air since restrictions there were relaxed.

Needless to point out, Phil welcomes QSO's with any of his "friends" in the Ottawa area. His call, on HF, is VE7MJY.

Courtesy of 100 Mile Free Press

Gratis Solar Action Reports

Energy, Mines and Resources Canada, Geophysics Division, studies solar activities from its Algonquin Park facility and prepares regular reports which are available to the public free of charge. Persons requesting these reports, will receive a review of geomagnetic activity affecting the polar cap, auroral, and sub-auroral zones for the previous period as well as a prediction of activity for the next period. Seventy-two hour forecasts are also available by calling (613)992-1299 in Ottawa for a recorded message or you can call direct for further information on the services available at (613)837-3527.

Defensive Driving Course Is Available

Larry, VE3WEH, has offered to conduct a one-day Defensive Driving Course for interested OVMRC members. Larry is a fully qualified course instructor of many years standing. The cost of the course is \$8 which simply covers the cost of the student manual. Normally this course costs \$55 .

Regardless of your driving experience, learning defensive driving can and does prevent accidents saving on personal injuries and the associated costs.

To register for the course or to obtain additional information about it, contact Larry, VE3WEH, any evening after 6.00pm at his home.

Radio Interference Now A Smaller Headache

Reprinted from the Industry Canada Newsletter

Thanks to new, efficient, mobile direction-finding (DF) systems, radio frequency inspectors now pinpoint radio interference sources quickly and accurately.

According to Don Paskovich of Automated Spectrum Management directorate (DASM), "It's the job of radio inspectors to track down and correct interference problems. It's the directorate's job to provide the hardware and software tools to inspectors so they provide the public with access to interference-free use of the radio spectrum."

In 1992, DASM, in cooperation with the regions, set out to improve essential interference reduction services, especially the acquisition of modern DF equipment. The highly motivated technical team - Paul Vaccani (team leader), Paul Paskovich and Norman Trickey from DASM; Maurice Theriault (Atlantic), Fernando Gutierrez (Quebec), Dave Slingerland (Ontario), Dan Lemoine (Prairies and Northwest Territories), and Ron Gloux (Pacific), developed user requirements and specifications, carried out field evaluations and selected the winning supplier.

"We tested five different DF systems before choosing the OAR DF system. Even after the selection was made, we continued to ask our radio inspector clients for their feedback in making improvements to the system," says Don.

"We purchased 34 OAR DF systems for our district offices. Sometimes, using mobile systems is the only way to get the job done."

Previously, many district offices only had directional antennas. "

Using antennas to pinpoint problems can be very slow," says Don. "With a mobile system, you can zero in faster on where the interference originates."

As the use of the radio frequency spectrum increases, so too does the likelihood of radio interference. Interference garbles messages on emergency frequencies, disrupts radio or TV broadcast reception, increases the bit-error rate in data transmissions or disrupts cellular phone conversations. Trying to find the source of such disruptions can be difficult, if not impossible, without DF systems. This is especially true in large urban areas, where signals can be blocked by tall buildings or topographical obstructions.

In Ottawa, Inspector Gerard Piette responded to a report of harmful interference to licenced operations by unknown sources. He traced signals to a large Ottawa shopping mall after one minute of air-time from the unknown station. At the busy shopping complex, he found an outside antenna, and within less than an hour, located an unknown low power transmitting station. Had the Inspector used outdated DF methods, this case could have gone unsolved for several days at best.

Sometimes it's deliberate, or it's interference caused by faulty equipment, or by people using a frequency assigned to one area while they're in another, or ELTs (Emergency Locator Transmitters that help search teams find crashed planes) are activated accidentally while being shipped by a courier.

Part 2

Let's Talk CW

Written by Ed LeBlanc, VE3VLF

In operating CW one needs the right equipment. In part one we looked at the straight and electronic keyers as the "microphones" of CW operations. The next most important part is the radio itself. Although I mentioned that a CW transmitter can be of a simple design, the same is not necessarily so for a CW receiver.

A receiver that can receive CW, as for any other mode, can be simple or complex. Whether you are using high or low power, a straight or electronic key, nothing beats a good receiver. A CW receiver must have good sensitivity, selectivity, image rejection, low intermodulation distortion, etc., qualities that mark a good receiver for any mode.

Most HF transceivers come with 3 kHz wide IF filters in their receive sections. Although this is good for SSB work, such a bandwidth is relatively wide for CW. If you plan to do a lot of CW operation, it's worth your while to purchase a CW filter for your rig. CW filters are typically made for 500 Hz or 270 Hz bandwidths and can be easily installed in most transceivers. Although the 270 Hz filter is the narrowest, I have found the 500 Hz filter to be fine for most operating needs. Depending on the IF frequency and the type, the cost of a single filter can range from 100 to 200 dollars. However, in fighting adjacent signals, these filters are worth their weight in gold.

Not only do CW filters help in reducing interference from other stations (QRM) they can also help in reducing static or noise (QRN). The amount of noise power at the output of a receiver is dependent on the bandwidth. The narrower the bandwidth, the less noise is heard.

For example, if you tune a CW station that is buried under a lot of noise while using a 3 kHz SSB filter, you will notice a vast improvement when you switch in a 500 Hz CW filter. The receive signal strength of the CW signal remains the same but because of the narrower bandwidth, the total noise power heard is reduced, thus increasing the effective signal to noise ratio. This is why any signal to noise ratio value must include the bandwidth used.

I have noticed this effect while listening to the CW bands on a wide filter setting with loud atmospheric static crashes coming through. Although the static crashes would wipe out most of the signals, a CW filter would bring them back to life and dampen the crashes.

When you commence a CW operating session, it's best to set your bandwidth to 3 kHz. This will enable you to hear more stations as you tune up and down the CW band, giving you a feel for the level of activity going on. Once you have established a contact with someone, switch in the CW filter.

According to the radio regulations, CW operation is permitted anywhere in any ham band. However, in order to reduce conflicts with other modes, CW operation takes place in the lower portions of a band, usually the first 100 kHz of most ham bands. The "DX window" of these bands is typically the first 25 kHz where only Extra Class operators in the U.S. are allowed to operate.

Before you start transmitting, listen up and down the CW section of the band to get a feel for how the band sounds, what DX is on the air, who is calling CQ, etc. If you decide to

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Minutes

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Robbie's Restaurant.
Bill Carr, VE3HCW,
will be contacting
members of the '92
class.

Larry, VE3WEH, asked
for an expression of
interest in a
Defensive Driving
Course he plans to
conduct sometime in
April or May. The cost
of the course will be
\$8 which is to cover
the cost of the
student manual. The
normal cost of the
course is \$55. Larry
is a qualified
instructor of many
year's standing. There
was a good response
and a general
consensus for a May
time frame.

Mike, VE3FFK,
announced the Girl
Guides On The Air
event is scheduled for
February 19 and 20. He
also announced a fox
hunt is scheduled to
occur on 26 February
at 1300 hours.

Hans Van Den Berg,
VE3REL, announced that
he had four copies of
the new Canadian Call
Sign data base for
sale. He will have
additional copies
available at the March
meeting.

There was a motion
from the floor that in
view of the club's
strong financial
position the coffee
and cookies following

the meeting should be
available at no cost
to the members. There
was general agreement
among the members and
the President
announced that this
would be the case.

Door Prize

The door prize, a copy
of Hints and Kinks for
the Radio Amateur, was
won by John Moffat,
VE3NJ, an OVMRC Radio
Course instructor.

Adjournment

The President, Jerry,
VE3CDS, adjourned the
meeting at 2130 hours
and was followed by a
social hour supported
by free coffee and
cookies.

Lets Talk CW

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call CQ, find a relatively clear
frequency. Before hammering out your
CQs, send "QRL" which means "are you
busy?" to make sure no one is using
the frequency. QRL has become the CW
equivalent of "Is this frequency in
use?"

What happens if you come across a
station calling CQ and you wish to go
back to him? The first trick is
making sure you reply at or very near
his transmit frequency. In other
words, you want to "zero beat" his
signal. The frequency displayed by
most transceivers in the CW mode
represents the transmit frequency not
the receive frequency. For example,
in the CW setting of the Kenwood TS-
850S, the actual receive frequency is

about 800Hz away from what is
displayed.

Most transceivers have a "zero beat"
position where the frequency display
shows the receive frequency. While in
this position, tune your receiver to
the other station until you achieve
zero beat, i.e. no tone. Switching
back into the CW position, you will
be able to hear the station again but
now your transmit frequency will be
the same as the other station's.

CW has had a long and proud history
in radio communications and in ham
radio in particular. Despite the
current debate on its future, CW is
an interesting and enjoyable part of
this hobby. All new hams are invited
to give it a try and see how the
oldest mode in radio really works.

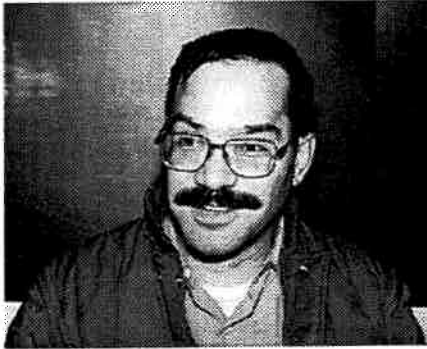
Its
HOMEBREW NIGHT
AT THE
MARCH 17TH MEETING OF THE
OVMRC

ITS TIME TO SHOW OFF YOUR HANDY WORK -
THOSE SPECIAL WORKING ITEMS YOU'VE MADE
AND OF WHICH YOU ARE PARTICULARLY PROUD.
YOUR HOMEBREW ITEMS WILL BE JUDGED
AGAINST OTHERS AND PRIZES WILL BE
AWARDED FOR THE MOST ORIGINAL, MOST
PRACTICAL. ETC.

- ITS INTERESTING
 - ITS EDUCATIONAL
 - ITS FUN
 - ITS PROFITABLE

SEE YOU AT THE MEETING ON MARCH 17th AT
THE MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Potpourri



No Code HF Operating

We certainly can understand why some want No Code operating on the HF bands, and there are many who agree with them...They need an HF band where No Coders can communicate with each other without the CW requirement...A band where like operators with like interests can congregate with each other about things No Coders talk about...A band where they can work skip and DX...A band where new transceivers and antennas can be economically bought, we have seen some at yard sales for as little as \$10...A band for SSB and AM...A band which satisfies all the wants and desires of the No Coders...There is such an HF band where the No Coders can talk to their friends...IT IS THE 11 METRE BAND !

Written by Whitey, K1VV

Oakland...Amateur operators are patrolling the hills in an effort to stop a recent rash of arson fires. Volunteers are on the lookout teams who are working with fire authorities to prevent another fire storm such as the one in 1991 that killed 25 people.

FCC...The code requirement for the handicapped has been relaxed. Disabled who in some manner have passed the 5 wpm requirement are now exempted (with a medical certificate) from having to pass the higher speed tests. Also, it is proposed that newly licenced amateurs be granted temporary operating privileges. The

time allowed would be from when the exam was passed until he received his regular licence.

Halifax (VE1TA)...

IPARN will be running by late spring or early summer. A dish antenna is due to arrive shortly and will be installed to UHF radios for a 4 way direction link.

Saskatoon (VE5YK)...If you want to help in an accident situation, you should stop, identify yourself and get the details before calling - "BREAK-BREAK". You should know that if you contact the authorities, you assume some of the responsibility of having called them. Get all possible details such as injuries, damage, traffic hazard, exact location, direction of travel, vehicle description, etc. Once a "BREAK" has been called, all other stations must remain silent. No other traffic should be heard until the breaking station clears or requests help.

Ste. Foy...An Industry Canada Radio Inspector used new DF equipment to identify the source of interference affecting a private commercial repeater in the Rimouski area. He discovered a sawmill operating more than 50 fixed and mobile units on an unauthorized frequency. The difficulty was in locating interference coming from so many places at the same time. In spite of this, using the new DF equipment he was able to identify the source of the problem quickly and accurately.