

THE OVMRC RAMBLER

Volume 41, Number 6,

February, 1997

What Is It You Want ?

It really poses a problem ! The executive attempts to arrange guest speakers and various presentations which they feel will inform, educate and entertain Club members. However, there is always "second thought" - is this what our members want ? As a result, the executive is extending an open invitation to all Club members to provide suggestions and ideas on what programs they would like for next year's meetings. Yes, next year's meetings; it does take time to arrange for guest speakers/presenters. Please submit your suggestions/ideas in writing to our President, Dan Reardon, VE3GUU. In addition, a one page questionnaire is being developed which will be included in the Rambler to solicit this and other information.

Looking Ahead To Field Day

The ground may be covered with ice and snow but Jake, VE2TQX, OVMRC Field Day Chairperson, is busy planning and organizing getting ready for this year's event. Jake is aiming at making this year's Field Day bigger, better and more rewarding. For example, he is trying to find some reasonably priced near new used tents. If you know of some used tents which are available, contact Jake. If you would like to assist in the planning and organizing of this year's Field Day Jake would be pleased to hear from you - his phone number is 684-5669.

Girl Guides On The Air

Again this year, the Girl Guides movement will be conducting its world wide "Girl Guides On The Air" on February 22 and 23. During the two-day event, Girl Guides will be the guests of hams around the world, using their equipment to talk to other Guides. The two-day exercise is an ideal opportunity for hams to promote and educate young women about the benefits and fun to be had by becoming a licensed amateur radio operator.

Radio station VE3JW at the Museum of Science and Technology will be one such station playing host to Girl Guides. Volunteer operators are required for this week-end to facilitate a world-wide Girl Guide ragchew. If you would like to volunteer to be an operator for a few hours during the week-end, please contact Jerry Wells, VE3CDS, at 828-3839

OVMRC Flea Market Taking Shape

Ken Barry, VE3KJB, Chairperson of the Flea Market, reports that the event is quickly taking shape. The Stittsville Arena has been confirmed for Saturday, April 26th as the site and date of the market. Seventeen tables have already been reserved. Ken advises that anyone thinking of getting a table should contact him now to reserve one. A reminder, purchase your flea market draw tickets for the ICOM IC-2340 VHF/UHF Dual Band Mobile Radio. Tickets are \$2 each, 3 for \$5.

The Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club

RAMBLER

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The 1996-1997 OVMRC Executive

President: Dan Reardon, VE3GUU, 836-2633
Vice-President: Vacant
Treasurer: Ernie Jury, VE3EJJ, 728-3666
Secretary: Earl Andrews, VE3AB, 828-5955

Standing Committee Chairs

Amateur Radio Exhibit: Jerry Wells, VE3CDS, 828-3839
Amateur Radio Training: VACANT
Field Day: Jake Guertin, VA3TQX, (819) 684-5669
Flea Market: Ken Barry, VE3KJB, 746-4823
Historical: Larry Wilcox, VE3WEH, 747-5565
Membership: Tom St. Julien, VA3OFD, 747-9577
Newsletter: Dan Doctor, VE3XDD, 745-9214
Publicity & Programs: Steve Middleton, VE3RUU, 731-6749

Radio Operations: Jacques Choquette, VE3TSC, 748-6597
Technical: Bob Shaw, VE3SUY, 737-9443
Novice: Joe Donnelly, VA3JJD, 488-3299

OVMRC Life Members

Ralph Cameron, VE3BBM
Doug Carswell, VE3ATY
Gerry King, VE3GK
Fred Noble, VE3BAJ
Jerry Wells, VE3CDS
Bill Wilson, VE3NR

Joining or Renewing RAC Membership

When joining or renewing your membership in RAC, remember to quote "OTT-101" on your application. This will reimburse the OVMRC \$3 of your RAC membership dues which will be passed back to you in the form of a credit on your next year's OVMRC dues.

OVMRC CODE PHONE - 737-0197

SEE THE OVMRC WEB PAGE:

<http://www.takeone.com/public/ovmrc.htm>

The OVMRC gratefully acknowledge the support of the Corel Corporation in producing the Rambler.

Mark Your Calendar !

Next general meeting:

Thursday, February 20th at 1930 hours in the main auditorium of the Museum of Science and Technology. It's the meeting we've been asking and waiting for - Packet Radio ! Our guest speaker will be John Rogers, VE3KYT, who operates a BBS. John is a knowledgeable Packet operator and will be pleased to answer your questions. Plan now to attend this meeting.

Deadline for next Rambler:

Thursday, February 27th, 1997.

OVMRC's Repeater:

**VE3TWO , 147.300MHz (+)
444.200MHz (+)**

Affiliated Clubs

The OVMRC exchanges newsletters with the following organizations:

Algoma ARC, Sault Ste Marie, ON
Augusta Amateur Radio Assoc. Augusta, ME
Border City Radio Club, Windsor, ON
Chatham-Kent ARC Inc. Chatham, ON
Calgary Amateur Radio Assoc. Calgary AB
Comox Valley ARC, Comox, B.C.
Halifax ARC, Halifax, N.S.
Heritage ARC, Cobourg, ON
Kingston ARC, Kingston, ON
Lambton County ARC, Sarnia, ON
London ARC, London, ON
Metroplex ACA, New York
Ottawa ARC, Ottawa, ON
Pioneer ARC, Nepean, ON
RAC, Kingston, ON
Rideau Lakes ARC, Smiths Falls, ON
Scarborough ARC Inc. Scarborough, ON
Seaway Valley ARC, Cornwall, ON
Sudbury ARC, Sudbury, ON
Surey ARC, Surrey, B.C.
Saskatoon ARC, Saskatoon, SK
Thousand Island ARC, Brockville, ON
West Island ARC, Dorval, PQ
Winnipeg ARC, Winnipeg, MAN

Sponsors

The OVMRC provides newsletters to the following organizations for their past support of our activities:

Bytown Marine, Ottawa, ON
Kenwood Electronics Canada Inc. Mississauga, ON
Corel Corporation, Ottawa, ON
WorldLink Internet Services Inc. Ottawa, ON

Ramblings

Wise words from our President,

Dan Reardon, VE3GUU

I looked at my forward planning calendar and realized I should remind everyone that we only have three months left before we hold our Club's June election for officers. With the foregoing in mind, I would urge Club members to consider standing for election to the executive for next year. Conversely, if you know of a Club member who would like to run for office but is somewhat reticent, please contact me or anyone on the executive and let us know. We need people to help with new ideas and have a say in the direction the Club takes in the coming year. I sincerely believe that we all want to see a full executive at the helm of the Club, an energetic, knowledgeable group who are willing to devote some of their expertise in the administration of the OVMRC. While the assuming of office on the executive does involve some work, it also involves some fun and, above all, a satisfaction of accomplishment. So, once again, think about it and let me or any of the executive know if you would like to stand for election to the executive at our June election. The Club needs YOU !

Many of you have repeatedly asked that we devote one of our meetings to Packet Radio. Well this month's meeting will feature John Rogers who operates a BBS - VE3KYT. I join you in looking forward to John's presentation as he is a knowledgeable Sysop whom, I know, will be pleased to attempt to respond to your questions.

Additionally, I would like to remind everyone that our March meeting will be Home Brew Night. So let's get building and see what

new inventions we can come up with which will dazzle the multitude. It's a fun night we all look forward to each year, so mark it on your calendar and reserve the night now (the third Thursday of the month).

I would like to remind everyone that we will be putting in a CTCS board on our repeater, VE3TWO. We should have this in place by the end of February. There will be tones put on the input, and we will let you know at the February meeting what those tones are as well as publishing them in the Rambler. The installation of the CTCS board will stop a lot, if not all, of the interference we have experienced during the past few months.

If you have any questions about the repeater, you may either call me or discuss it with me at our meetings.

In still another area, we need at least two volunteers to join our Technical Group. I would like to see at least 3 or 4 people in this group whose main area of responsibility would be our repeater and its operation. If you feel you would like to assist in this area, please let me know. (NOTE: You do not have to be an Electronic Engineer. However, some electronic knowledge and experience is necessary).

I would also like to take this opportunity to introduce and welcome John Rogers. John has stepped forward and volunteered to look after the Club's Web Page on a full-time basis. Welcome aboard John, we are looking forward to seeing our new and exciting Web Page. The Club thanks Richard Hagemeyer and Rick Furniss for their efforts in developing our Web Page.

Minutes

**OVMRC Regular Meeting,
January 16th, 1997.**

The meeting was called to order by President Dan, VE3GUU, at 1932 hours. The membership welcomed guest Ernie DeCoste, former curator at the Museum of Science and Technology who was attending this meeting to assist Jerry Wells in providing background history on radio station VE3JW.

President Dan relayed a thank you and appreciation from the Administrator of the Union Mission for last month's (December) Club's very thoughtful donation of food.

A representative of Industry Canada was to have been the Club's guest speaker for the evening but, again, cancelled his scheduled appearance. As a result, an alternate presentation was made of a very informative film, "Cutting Through The Interference", on EMI/RFI produced by Industry Canada. Additionally a tour of and briefing session on radio station VE3JW lead by Jerry Wells and Ernie DeCoste was conducted. The membership was divided into two groups which alternated touring VE3JW and viewing the EMI film. Following the screening of the film, Ralph Cameron, VE3BBM, provided additional explanation of EMI and conducted a questions and answer period. President Dan announced that the Club's executive had approved the installation of a

CTCSS (tone access) board in the Club's repeater, VE3TWO. He pointed out the installation of the board will eliminate much of the interference we now experience. It is planned to have the board installed by the end of February, 1997. Members will be advised which audio tone frequency must be used. Dan also pointed out that during activities such as Nets, the tone access will be disabled to facilitate maximum participation from all hams.

It was emphasized that VE3TWO is to remain an open repeater and the installation of the CTCSS board is not meant to exclude users but, rather, it is to eliminate false triggering of the repeater.

The Club's insurance policy has been reviewed and updated. It now provides better coverage at a comparable price.

The Club is looking for a volunteer to perform the annual audit of the Club's books at the conclusion of the current season. The volunteer would have to have some background and experience in bookkeeping. Volunteers are asked to contact either Dan Reardon, VE3GUU, or Ernie Jury, VE3EJJ. The meeting was adjourned at 2115 hours and was followed by refreshments and ragchew.

Planning Ahead

The programs for the five remaining regular Club meetings have been tentatively set. For those members who like to plan ahead, take note of the following:

FEBRUARY

Our guest speaker will be John Rogers, VE3KYT, who will be speaking about "packet radio". John has operated a BBS for a number of years and is very knowledgeable about the subject.

MARCH

It's Home Brew Night!. Members are getting loads of advance notice of this event which should result in a large number of "entries". Prizes will be awarded.

APRIL

The up and coming medium of ATV will be

highlighted at our April meeting. Bill Westbrook, Chairman of the ATV Committee, will be bringing everyone up-to-date on his Committee's work.

MAY

This will be a busy meeting. It will be "Rig Night". Members will be invited to bring in their new and antique rigs. Graham Walker of Bytown Marine has agreed to display some new rigs. Graduates from our radio course will be introduced and have an opportunity of seeing a variety of rigs on display. The slate of Club officers for 1997-98 will be presented.

JUNE

The election of officers will be the main focus of this meeting.

Delegated Examiners

Industry Canada has now released a current list of "Delegated Examiners" for Ottawa and environs. If you are looking to upgrade your licence, or if a friend is looking to attempt a licensing test, contact one of the following examiners:

ARNPRIOR

Peter DeWolf
RR #1
Breaside, Ont. KOA 1G0
Telephone (home) 613-724-0285
Telephone (Work) 613-623-5914

CRYSLER

Mel Massia
(Iroquois Amateur Radio Club)
RR #3, Box 241
Crysler, Ont. KOA 1R0
Telephone 613 - 987-2159

PEMBROKE

Les K. Thom
RR #1
Pembroke, Ont. K8A 6W2

PETAWAWA

Donald Greene
17 Antwerp Street
Petawawa, ONT. k8h 1j1
Telephone 613 - 687-0061

SMITHS FALLS

Wayne Henwood
S.F.A.R.C.
RR #4
Smiths Falls, Ont. K7A 4S5

KEMPTVILLE

Ken Robinson
Rideau Amateur Radio Club
P.O. Box 376
Kemptville, Ont. K0G 1J0
Telephone 613 - 258-4712

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Dana Currie
37 Deniverville Drive
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Telephone (home) 613- 733-7732
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NEPEAN

Richard Hagemeyer
Ottawa Amateur Radio Club
5 Wolmsley Crescent
Nepean, Ont. K2G 1J3
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Mike Kelly
Ottawa Amateur Radio Club
P.O. Box 8873
Ottawa, Ont. K1G 3j2

OTTAWA

Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club
P. O. Box 5530, Station "F"
Ottawa, Ont. K2C 3M1

The following amateurs have been appointed Delegated Examiners from the above noted Club:

Maurice-Andre Vigneault
Telephone 613 - 749-9010

Robert Kavanagh
Telephone 613 - 225-6785

Jerry Wells,
Telephone 613 - 828-3839

OTTAWA

Wayne Poulter
Pioneer Amateur Radio Club
2497B Iris Street
Ottawa, Ont. K2C 1C9
Telephone 613 - 828-9210

OTTAWA

Bernard J. Gervais
215 Nepean Street Apt 1009
Ottawa, Ont. K2P 2K5
Telephone 613 - 237-7423

The Dipole...

Get It Up ! - And Keep It Up !

Written By Dennis Powers, AB6QR

So many hams I talk with tell me how they can't keep a dipole in the air during the winter. It seems that all too often they tend to come apart right at the feedpoint. Or in some cases, the antenna wire itself breaks, or the squirrels chow down on the ropes holding them up and down they come. Pretty soon the dejected ham grows weary of the battle, saying, "dipoles are okay I guess, but I just couldn't keep one in the air, so I haven't been too active the last few years. One of these days, I'll put up a tower and then I can get back on". Translation: "Dipoles work fine, but every one I have built has been a slip shod job, and falls down at the drop of a hat. One of these days when I have about three grand I'll put up a tower and get back on the air." Maybe he will, but then again, maybe the same lack of attention to detail will be spent on the tower, and it will fall down come the first good wind.

The problem seems to be that folks don't appreciate the need for good engineering ! Take for example the good old Zip Cord dipole. Sure it's a neat parlor trick, and great for backpacking, but for a permanent antenna - really !

These mythical designs get passed on from generation to generation, and given descriptives like "trusty", "faithful", and yes, "good old". Surely, if you want an antenna to live up to these time worn endearments, you have to give it a fair chance, and that means good engineering.

So how do you build a dipole that will be there when you want to get on the air ? A dipole has four major areas where it can fail :

- 1) the wire
- 2) the support ropes
- 3) the end insulators, and
- 4) the feedpoint

THE WIRES

One of the first mistakes one is likely to make in constructing their dipole is to make a poor selection of wire for the antenna. We tend to look around until we find anything

that is long enough, or failing that, run down to Radio Shack and buy their seven strand wire, which is plentiful, and reasonably inexpensive.

Or in some cases, we go over to the hardware store, and buy 12 or 14 gauge household conductor type wire. The problem with all of these solutions is that the wire isn't strong enough. It will either break, or stretch and de-tune the antenna, and then break. So the solution is to get some strong wire to begin with ! I use 12 or 14 gauge copperweld, which is available from Crown Metal, and is listed in the AES catalogue. This wire is drawn steel with a heavy copper plate on the exterior surface, and I've NEVER lost an antenna to a broken wire. You could practically tow a car with the stuff.

THE ROPES

Who ever thinks about ropes ???

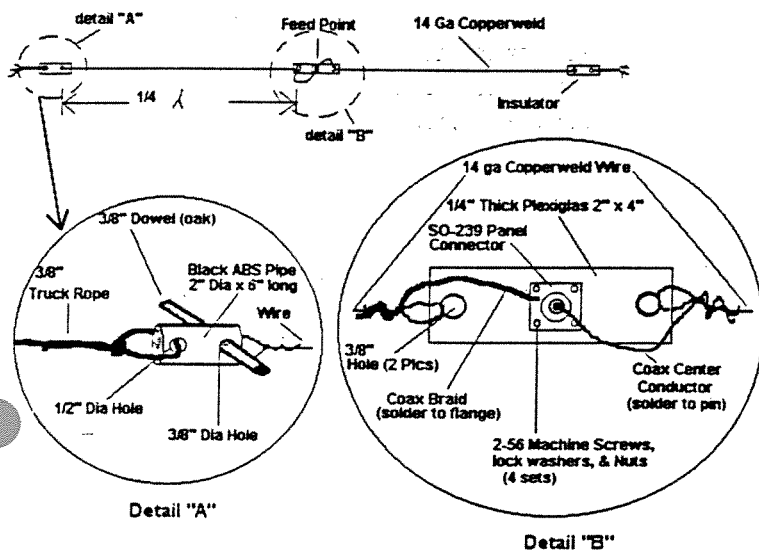
After all, one rope is as good as another - right ? Ahhh, not so my friends ! Squirrels love hams that use the hemp type ropes; so do the birds. The natural fibres are just great for lining one's nest for a cold winter night. Put your dipole up with hemp, and say "good bye". Most of the synthetic ropes are not protected from UV, and the sun will kill them in one summer, leaving virtually no tensile strength when you want your antenna to survive a good windstorm. What does work is the typical black and orange truckers' rope. I use 3/8" rope, which is available for about \$8 - \$10 per hundred feet. The black fibre is UV resistant, and you can count on 4 to 5 years of service, or more.

THE INSULATORS

Good ceramic or glass end insulators are hard to find. Something that works well, and is readily available, is ABS pipe (the black stuff, which by the way, is also UV resistant). Looking at Detail "A" in the diagram, you will see that I cut a 6" length of 2" diameter pipe. Next, I drill a 1/2" hole through both walls at
Continued on the next page

The Dipole Antenna

one end. The 3/8" rope will pass easily through both walls. Tie a square knot, leaving a couple inch tail. Wrap the tail to the rest of the rope (not the looped part) with bailing wire. This will keep the knot from ever coming undone. It is also advisable to smooth the rough edges of the holes with a file or knife before putting the rope through, which will help prevent any cutting of the rope as the antenna moves in the wind.



way. I would rather have two bits worth of dowel fail, than a perfectly good antenna. I would much rather put my antenna back up than have to fix it and put it back up. The shear strength of oak is awesome, but less than the tensile strength of the rest of the system. This means that your antenna will probably survive the winter, but if it should come down, it will be easy to put back up. This brings up another point. You want to get your dipole as high as possible, but you want to find a balance between height, and the expected motion of the tree itself in the wind. If you put the antenna up where the tree is getting skinny, you will have more motion during the wind, and a greater chance of your antenna coming down due to the increased stress on the system. Keep this in mind as you put up your antenna.

THE FEEDPOINT

The feedpoint serves a dual purpose. First it acts as a place to connect your coax, and secondly, it acts as a strain relief. Detail "B" shows the feedpoint. Start out with a 2 x 4 by 1/4" (3/16" will do) thick piece of Plexiglas. Many glass shops will carry this, and you can come by scraps cheaply. Drill a 5/8" hole in the centre. Next, place a SO-239 panel connector in position by sticking the threaded side through the hole. Hold this in place while you mark the locations of the four holes at the corners of the flange. Now drill a hole at each location which will freely accept a size 2 - 56 screw. The SO - 239 will go here, held in place by the four screws, lock washers, and nuts. But first, drill a 3/8" hole out at each end, leaving at least 3/4" of material to the outside of the holes, and remove any sharp edges. Now you can mount the SO - 239. Do not over tighten the screws. I usually double-nut them just to be safe.

Find a piece of coax, and cut 6" -8" from it, and remove the outer jacket. Next push the braid off and strip the dielectric insulation from the centre conductor. Using a 100 watt iron, solder one end of the braid to one of the sides of the flange (one of the sides nearest the 3/8" holes). Solder the piece of centre
Continued on the next page

At the other end of the insulator, drill a 3/8" hole through both walls. These holes can be left sharp. Twist a loop in the end of the antenna wire that is at least 3/8" on the inside. With copperweld, about 3 twists where the wire wraps back on itself is adequate, and no soldering is required. Pass a 6" length of 3/8" oak dowel through the wall of the insulator, through the loop in the copperweld, and back out through the other side of the insulator. This will leave about 2" of dowel protruding from either side. Wrap electrical tape over each protruding dowel end until there is enough to keep the dowel from slipping out of the insulator.

You may be thinking, "Aha! QR's dipole has a fatal flaw ... the first thing to break is going to be that dowel!" If so, you are absolutely right! More often than not, if anything is going to fail on one of my dipoles, it is going to be that dowel. It's designed that

The Dipole Antenna

conductor into the centre pin of the connector.

Pass the feedpoint end of one of the copperweld lengths through the 3/8" hole in the Plexiglas nearest the side where you soldered the length of braid, and bend it back upon itself, giving it one twist. Next leaving plenty of slack in the length of braid, place the free end at the point where you started to twist the copperweld. Now twist both copperweld and braid back along the wire. Solder the twisted section well for a good electrical connection. Repeat this procedure at the other end of the Plexiglas with the other length of copperweld and the centre conductor.

What you have now is a feedpoint to which you can easily attach and remove coax, as well as a strong point that will take up any strain in the wind. By leaving slack in the end and centre conductor you have effectively cured that which kills most dipoles.

When you attach coax to the connector, you may wish to grind the sleeve of the PL - 259 back a little so you get more of the centre pin into the SO - 239, but this is optional. Use a pair of pliers to ensure that the PL - 259 is tight, and wrap the whole thing with coax seal. Check your favourite electric shop for coax seal and also for an electrical epoxy that is great for coating the whole connection and will further ensure that no water leaks in.. I also strongly recommend that you coat the opposite end of the SO - 239 as well.

Remember, when you cut your copperweld to length, the dimension of each side should be 1/4 wavelength at your design frequency ! Calculate this by dividing 234 by the frequency in MHz. For example, for 7.125 MHz, dividing 234 by 7.125 = 32.84 feet per side. To this add one foot per side which you will need to form the loops at the end insulator and feedpoint.

You can put up the dipole as a "flat top" horizontally oriented antenna, a sloper or an inverted vee, depending upon your available support and intended use. Don't worry too much, just get it up and have fun. You can always move it later. Give it a try and have fun !

A Thrill Renewed

It may have taken more than 12 months, but when Joe Tondreau, VE2JHT, received a QSL card a few weeks ago from NASA confirming his contact with the Atlantis Shuttle on November 18th, 1995, he was "one happy ham" !

After three days of trying to break through the pile-up of amateurs trying to contact the shuttle, Joe managed to have his call acknowledged by Astronaut Cris Hatfield. Joe points out the contact was a simple exchange of call signs, although he says he was so excited on making contact, he asked Cris Hatfield to repeat his call sign, VA00G.

Joe explains that he used an old Heathkit SB102 to monitor the shuttle's transmissions. He credits Ed Morgan, VE3GX, who repaired the rig and trained him on how to tune the unit, for his being able to make the contact which brought him a "prize" QSL card which he cherishes. His uplink efforts were done with his Kenwood TM91A, an FM Tri-Bander. Joe says he used low wattage, about 5 watts, through an excellent Diamond X5000 antenna to make the contact.

"You try and try to break through the pile-up to make contact but get nowhere," he said. "Then, all of a sudden, the shuttle acknowledges your call and you're tongue-tied, it's such a surprise."

While being able to contact the shuttle was a real thrill, receiving the QSL card renewed Joe's feeling of achievement. However, the QSL card brought with it another surprise that has really thrilled Joe. A hand-written notation on the card states - "Love your paper mill - great area" . Joe lives in Gatineau, Quebec, where the largest employer is a paper mill. Joe and all those with whom he discusses it, marvel at the time and personal touch Cris Hatfield took in acknowledging the contact and letting Joe know that he knew the environment in which he lives. The question arises, how did Hatfield learn of the paper mill - from space or personal experiences ?

**OVMRC MEMBERS' EXPERTISE
&
PROGRAM SURVEY**

In preparation for next year, your Executive would like to know more about the members in our Club. They would like to find out your area of expertise and any general or special skills you have which may assist the Club. For example, if you are a lawyer, you might be called upon to assist with interpretation of a legal clause in our Insurance contract. Or if you are skilled at climbing towers, the Executive might refer a member to you for assistance. Perhaps you want to assist in some way with a special project or in organizing or assisting with a Special Interest Group or other activity. Perhaps you would like to become a volunteer and operate the Amateur Radio Station at the Museum of Science & Technology.

The Executive would also like your opinion and views about the program next year and any activities or ideas you think should be considered for the coming year. Your opinions are important so please take a little time to complete and return this sheet by mail or by giving it to our Membership Chairperson, Tom St Julien VA3OFD when you check in at the next meeting.

Your responses will be treated as confidential information and will not be used for any purpose other than stated. No report is being made of this information, it will only be used to contact you to check whether you want to provide assistance and to assist in determining the program for next year.

1. Full Name and Callsign: _____

2. Current Occupation: _____

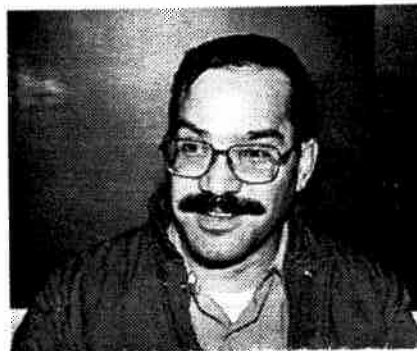
3. If Retired, Former Occupation: _____

4. Skills: (Please list them all) _____

5. Please list your suggestions, program subjects, speakers, or other activities that you would like the Executive to consider for next year. If you are willing to assist with any Club activities, please list them also.

Potpourri

*A sampling of news and comments
from newsletters and newspapers
from across the country - written
by Jacques Choquette, VE3TSC*



Orillia - Q. In radio telephony what is the purpose of the gain control ? A. A gain control prohibits the operation of an amateur station for the purpose of profit !

Scarboro - (Feedline Nov 96) Internet ham sites: Grid Square lookup - www.amsat.org/amsat/toys/gridconv.html. APRS www.bluenet.net/ke4htm/. NorCalQRP-www.wefix.net/norcal.html.

Algoma - (ARNS Nov 96) I bought a new computer. It came completely loaded, guaranteed for 90 days, but in 30 it was outmoded. (The basic truth ! VE3TSC)

Calgary - A foundation has been laid to give amateur radio a permanent position in space. Delegates from Russia, Italy, Canada, France, Great Britain, Germany, Japan and the USA met at the NASA Space Centre in Houston to plan a permanent ham station aboard the International Space Station, to be tended by crew members. This group will provide for the planning, coordination and performance of amateur radio projects on the space station similar to the manner SAREX operates.

Kingston - For all you CW aficionados, Morsum Magnificat, a UK based international magazine devoted entirely to Morse, has a new Web page ; www.morsum.demon.co.uk. Peter VE6ANO - This fellow has found a rather good Kenwood rig control program titled "Rigmaster" by IOJX. Everything you do on the rig can be done on the computer, including SWR/S meters. The program has a feature that with the S meter and an antenna gain plotting function, you get an idea of your antenna's pattern. The program gives a nice graph of antenna gain and front to back with a dB1 gain rating.

Monitoring Times - A Bill is to be passed in the US Senate allowing state/local governments to handle complaints of CB interference. The Senator introducing the Bill

wants local governments to regulate CB because the FCC is no longer capable of the job. Some hams sense trouble coming due to the fact that such a Bill could also allow locals, wishing to do so, to regulate amateur radio.

FCC - Seems that after the FCC collected huge amount of money from the sale of public frequencies to commercial interests, the price of frequencies has come down. Latest bids are only at 1/10 of what they were getting last year. The depreciated prices is attributed to the PCS market getting crowded as well as earlier bidders are finding it difficult to raise money.

'73 Nov 96 - Federal Bureaucrats Virus: Divides your hard disc into hundreds of little units, each of which does practically nothing, but all of which claim to be the most important of your computer. (I wonder, do they also go on strike ? VE3TSC)

Calgary (London Times Nov 20/96 - Thieves were apprehended due to the fact they stole a GPS equipped vehicle. Criminals are in jail because IBM had installed a vehicle tracking device in one of its vans. A crook stole the vehicle and was tracked on a screen by IBM engineers. They reported the vans whereabouts to the police, who then monitored the stolen van until they pinpointed its position on a map. The crooks arrest led to the breaking of a car stealing gang. The vehicle was a system that connected to the GEC - Marconi Star Track GPS tracking system thus allowing police to plot the vans every move. This system communicates with a modem built into the vehicle which talks to this network. This then transmits all positioning data to the IBM service centres which can allocate work to individuals based upon their location. (I'll bet such workers' coffee breaks are short ones. VE3TSC)