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Ensure that you continue to receive your copy of the *Rambler*!

Have you renewed your OVMRC membership?

If not, contact Membership chair, Tom St. Julien, VA3OFD, at 747-9577, or by e-mail at <tom.st.julien@takeone.com>, and/or come out to the October 15 general meeting!

NiCad and Gel Cell Care for Dummies

Part I

by Len Gelfand, VE3LGZ

SEVEN HABITS TO HIGHLY EFFECTIVE BATTERY CARE

1. Avoid overdischarging. Stop using the battery as soon as your device gives the low battery warning. Don't push it.

If you can, stop discharging a NiCad when the voltage of the weakest cell drops to 1.0V. A 7.2V NiCad has 6 cells inside so you must never discharge it to lower than 6.0 V. Even this may damage the battery as explained in the section "Discharging NiCads." Stop discharging a 12.0V gel cell (it has 6 cells inside) when it drops to 10.5 V (1.75 V per cell).

2. Avoid overcharging. Use the charger recommended and charge according to the instruction manual. Only if you are knowledgeable should you try to deviate from these instructions

3. If the instruction manual says you can leave the battery on charge continuously, be skeptical. You can leave the battery on continuous charge only if you are sure that your charger is an intelligent one. Almost no chargers are.

4. If a NiCad won't take a full charge in the recommended time, don't keep it on charge longer in the hope that it will revive. You will only destroy the cells that are still good.

5. Avoid using a car battery charger unless you are certain that it won't damage the battery.

6. Fully recharge gel cells (and all lead-acid batteries) as soon as possible after use. These batteries suffer damage if left in a partly discharged state.

7. Minimize the frequency of charging NiCads after partial discharge. NiCads should be fully discharged before recharging. It isn't necessary to discharge them totally every time. Do it as often as possible. NiCads can be stored in any state of discharge without harm. (*NiCad*, continued on page ⑧)

Rambler

Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club Inc.
P.O. Box 5530, Stn. F
Ottawa, Ontario
K2C 3M1



OVMRC Executive (1998-99)

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Doug Carswell, VE3ATY	Ed Morgan, VE3GX
Gerry King, VE3GK	Fred Noble, VE3BAJ
Bill Wilson, VE3NR	

Affiliated Clubs

The OVMRC is pleased to exchange newsletters with the following Amateur Radio Clubs across Canada and the United States.

Algoma ARC	Sault Ste Marie, ON
Augusta ARA	Augusta, ME, USA
Border City ARA	Windsor, ON
Chatham-Kent ARC	Chatham, ON
Calgary ARC	Calgary, AB
Comox Valley ARC	Comox, BC
Halifax ARC	Halifax, NS
Heritage ARC	Coburg, ON
Kingston ARC	Kingston, ON
Lambton County ARC	Sarnia, ON
London ARC	London, ON
Metroplex ACA	New York, NY, USA
Ottawa ARC	Ottawa, ON
Pioneer ARC	Nepean, ON
Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC)	Ottawa, ON
Rideau Lakes ARC	Smiths Falls, ON
Scarborough ARC	Scarborough, ON
Seaway Valley ARC	Cornwall, ON
Sudbury ARC	Sudbury, ON
Surrey ARC	Surrey, BC
Saskatoon ARC	Saskatoon, SK
Thousand Island ARC	Brockville, ON
West Island ARC	Dorval, PQ
Winnipeg ARC	Winnipeg, MB

Sponsors

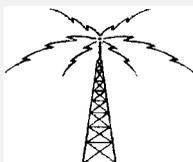
The OVMRC acknowledges the following organizations for their support of our activities by providing them with courtesy copies of the *Rambler*.

Bytown Marine, Ottawa, ON
Kenwood Electronics Canada Inc., Mississauga, ON
TakeOne Info System, Ottawa, ON



OVMRC code phone:

Practise your CW!
737-0197



OVMRC Repeater:

147.300 MHz (+)
444.200 MHz (+)



OVMRC web page:

<http://www.takeone.com/public/ovmrc.htm>
Webmaster - John Rodger, VE3JR
jrodger@takeone.com



Next Meeting:

Oct. 15, 1998
Rambler Deadline:
Oct. 23, 1998

The *Rambler* is the official newsletter of the Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club Inc. and is published 11 times a year (monthly, except for July). Opinions expressed in the *Rambler* are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the OVMRC Inc., its officers or its members. Permission is granted to republish the contents in whole or in part, providing the source is acknowledged. Commercial use of the contents is expressly prohibited. Submit articles to the editor by e-mail to: <ve3mog@igs.net>.

Strays

Comments by OVMRC President,
Doug Carswell, VE3ATY



We had approximately 60 guests and members in attendance at our September meeting. Jim Smith, our guest speaker, told us about the National Traffic System (NTS). I found this topic particularly interesting as I had worked in a “Communications Centre” at one time in my checkered career, and I found many parallels between the two systems.

In today’s world of the Internet, satellite communications, etc., NTS was the only structured communications system in existence in some parts of California during a recent earthquake. We have to keep in mind that the availability of electrical power, telephone lines, etc are subject to the whims of nature, whereas Amateurs can operate independent of external power supplies. Hence the importance of Field Day and the NTS.

Special interest groups

During the meeting, I invited members to express their interest with respect to organizing a Saturday Breakfast Group. A number of individuals who indicated their support for this were directed to speak to Bob Shaw. I will be checking with Bob at the next meeting on how things have turned out.

In parallel with this effort, the executive is interested in determining whether or not our members would like to form special interest groups. For example, there is a some interest in QRP and homebrew activities. Bring your ideas to the next club meeting!

Restoring the repeater

On other matters, I am pleased to report that John Pope, VE3ACI, has taken over the responsibility for VE3TWO and I am sure we will see many improvements. John looked after TWO sometime ago and knows his way around. We hope when John has completed his initial survey, he will give us a status report including a description of the work that needs to be done to bring VE3TWO up to its full potential.

Volunteers to the rescue!

I am also pleased to report that Evan DeCorte, VE3DEC, has come forward to take over the Radio Ops Chair. Evan attended last year’s training course at the Museum. As most of you know, the Radio Ops Chairperson looks after the requests to the Club for Amateur Radio services provided by its members.

During the summer months and in the absence of the Radio Ops Chairperson, I realized how much work is involved in performing this task. Evan, in addition to being our Radio Ops Chairman, attends Glebe Collegiate. Please give Evan your support while he performs his job. Let him know you are willing to act as a “communicator” at community events requiring for our services.

Storage space offered

Perhaps some of you are not aware that Jake Guertin, VA3TQX, has provided us with storage space for Field Day antennas and other club equipment for a number of years. Unfortunately, that space is no longer available to us.

While reviewing our alternatives, the executive at one point considered renting appropriate space. As you can imagine, renting is so pricey that we might as well dispose of the equipment and purchase replacement materials on an as-needed basis.

Fortunately, Randy Nelson, VA3RDN, has volunteered the use of his barn for the storage of this equipment. Thanks Randy for making this space available to the club. This offer of space will help us stay within budget.

Coffee, tea, or you?

Now for the bad news. We still require assistance with respect to the coffee, tea, and cookies at the end of the club meetings. If you, or someone you know, would like to help the club out in this way, please let me know. ❖

Minutes

September 17, 1998 general meeting
taken by Patricia Rowan, VA3PUR



After an introduction by club president, Doug Carswell, VE3ATY, the meeting began with an acknowledgment of the fine work of Maurice-André Vigneault, VE2MA/VE3VIG, in the Lighthouse and Lightship activity weekend.

A call for visitors was made. Visitors were Guy Charron, VA3FZA; Graham Bennett, prospective ham; and John Pope, VE3ACI, who has applied for membership.

The members were asked if anyone had any technical questions. Ernie Jury, VE3EJJ, asked "How do I put phone tips on tinsel cords?" Response: Use crimp on connectors — do not solder.

Another member asked, "I bought at auction a 3HP card, RS2-HP1B (bus), how do I use same?" Response: by VE3ACI, "You may need a new card."

Volunteers were requested to fill some open positions, for example, an operations chairperson was needed. This person would deal with calls for assistance with radio communications. Evan DeCorte, VE3DEC, volunteered.

Communications assistance required for a political rally on Parliament Hill by those wishing to protest the firearms laws. Larry Wilcox, VE3WEH, was approached by Wayne Salhany, VE3WQS, who received a police request to assist in the communications from an ambulance on the Hill to a parking lot in Lebreton Flats 20,000 - 30,000 people were expected to protest on Sept 22nd from 15:00 to 22:00. Volunteers were requested, however, many objected to the rally and it was up to those who wanted to volunteer to do so on an individual basis.

Someone is needed to set up coffee and cookies for the post-meeting social gathering. Nobody as yet has volunteered.

A technical person was needed to take responsibility

for VE3TWO, and John Pope, VE3ACI, has volunteered.

Rambler mailing assistance was needed by Susan Mogensen, VE3MOG, and Jim Haskill, VE3SPK, has volunteered.

A number of general announcements were made. Wise Owl Net: Leo E. Desjardins, VE3NVL, is not able to continue controlling this net and has arranged for a series of controllers.

A Saturday morning breakfast club is proposed. See Bob Shaw, VE3SUY, for details. A suggestion was made that a sign-on sheet be made available at the meetings for those who would like to attend the next breakfast. The breakfast could be held the Saturday following the Thursday meeting.

Storage: Jake Guertin, VE2TQX, needs storage space for the Field Day equipment.

Pot Hole Net: Ernie Jury, VE3EJJ, finds that a problem with this net is to find a focus. One suggestion is that a subject matter be proposed each week for discussion the following week. All are invited to contribute on Sunday morning 10:00 at 3.760 MHz.

Variety show: Ken Barry, VE3KJB, is soliciting for additional talent to be included in the upcoming December show.

Equipment on view: Ziggy Bernhoff, VE3JDA, indicated that the first item is sold, however the second piece is available. See him after the meeting.

Code Practice: Bob Shaw, VE3SUY, would like to have on-air practice in the evenings for the students that they are teaching. Volunteers would send CW for his students to copy at 35/40 words per minute from 7:00 to 7:30 p.m., and again from 9:00 to 9:30 p.m. A PC with Super Morse would be useful.

(*Minutes*, continued on page 5)

Letters

Have some feedback for the club, the executive, or the *Rambler*? Send your thoughts along to Susan Mogensen, VE3MOG, *Rambler* Editor, 1010 Bosque Crescent, Cumberland, ON, K4C 1C3, or via e-mail (preferred!) at <ve3mog@igs.net>.

Dear Editor,

For three reasons, our President's excursion into Canadian history (*Rambler*, v.43, #1, p.3) should not have been published.

1. Denigrating the government will probably impede rather than help in getting what we want. If you want something from someone, especially someone far stronger than you, insulting them is not the way to go.

Instead, if we want higher EMI susceptibility standards, we should work with other groups having the same goal. We should consult with the government to find out what the obstacles are and how they might be overcome. We should state and document the need for higher standards.

2. Personal views of history, or other topics not related to Amateur Radio have no place in our club's newsletter. Perhaps we can talk about these subjects at a meeting or on a net.

3. The history espoused is one-sided. There are other historical events that would provide a balanced view.

Cordially,

Len Gelfand, VE3LGZ

Wanted: Refreshment Service

If you would like to help out the club by serving the post-meeting refreshments, please contact club President, Doug Carswell, VE3ATY, at 829-7167, or by e-mail at <ve3aty@takeone.com>.



Minutes, continued

The guest speaker was Jim Smith, VE3NJV, who spoke about the National Traffic System. He explained how traffic was handled in conjunction with ARRL. The continent is divided into three zones, and further divided into sections. We in Ontario are in section 11 with Quebec and the Maritimes.

There are four types of nets with the local one on VHF at 2 m. There is informal as well as formal traffic and this can replace packet, phone, CW, AMTOR or e-mail. It is lots of fun and good practice for the emergencies that sometimes strike.

There was a discussion of protocol and the NTS can be accessed by these nets: Kingsmere Traffic Net on VHF repeater VE2KPG 147.36 on Monday, Wednesday and Friday; OPN HF, daily 7:00 p.m. local time on 3742; OSN HF on CW daily at 4, 7, and 10 local time on 3667.

This system is very flexible and a net directory is available. One should know the "Q" signals. The system has proved especially valuable to Snowbirds visiting the U.S.A. Handouts will be available at the end of the meeting.

Door prizes: a RAC Operating Manual, donated by Bytown Marine, was won by Norm, VE3NFH. A net directory, also donated by Bytown Marine, was won by Randy Nelson, VE3RDN. The 50/50 draw (\$30.00) was won by Bob Campbell.

Bryce questioned the financial statement and Ernie Jury, VE3EJJ, would look into his concerns and report back at the next meeting.

Certificates: Larry Wilcox handed out certificates for those who checked in on the anniversary day of the Wise Owl Net. Special thanks to Dan Doctor, VE3XDD, who drew up the certificates. The meeting ended on this note and everyone joined the social gathering. ❖

Ten is Alive!

by Maurice-André Vigneault, VA2MA/VE3VIG

Ten metres is alive! Let's have a net!

Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile...
Almonte, Kenmore, Orleans...Porto Rico, Aruba...
Tennessee, Carolina, Florida...
all this and more is now available to me from my balcony antenna cut for 10 metres.

Although 10 is not usually a night band as, inversely, 80 m is not a day band, this does not prevent daily nets to be conducted regularly on 80, i.e. ONTARS on 3755. We thought, then, of opening a net on 10 in the evening, when most Amateurs are available.

Launching a new net

We had been talking about a "net on 10" for about two years. Conditions were not favorable then, but now, as solar activity is on the rise and propagation on 10 is getting better, we decided to give it a try.

I had previously been listening on 28.500 to 28.515 MHz and picked up a few "illegals" from time to time who thought that the frequency was theirs. Otherwise, that narrow part of the band was relatively quiet even as many contacts were being conducted below that portion.

Calling all stations

On Monday, August 10, 1998, at 2300 UTC (7 p.m. Ottawa local time) I opened up on 10 metres at 28.505 MHz and started calling all stations for 10 minutes.

A few weak signals were heard but no contacts were made. The intention was to be on the air everyday of the week from Monday to Friday for a trial and evaluation period.

As the word about a net on 10 got around, things picked up through the week and on Friday we logged 18 stations, three from Stateside.

We continued the trial period five days a week and activity varied from day to day. We had fixed and mobile stations reporting in to the net that allowed us to map out the National Capital region regarding propagation.

Survey says

We asked for comments and conducted a survey on preferences. Some stations liked the one-night-a-week net, but most wanted a five-day opportunity to report in.

Then a suggestion was made to hold an "informal gathering" rather than a formal net and one station could take over control at the beginning in order to let every station have a say in an orderly manner.

Everyone rallied to this idea of a gathering.

In a second part of the nightly gathering, a discussion period or forum could take place, or on some nights a particular subject could be discussed.

Everyone rallied to this idea of a gathering. It was also suggested to hold 28.505 MHz as a calling frequency on 10 metres 24 hours a day for all Amateurs in the region.

Spreading the word

Since it is intended to reach all Amateurs in the National Capital region, a presentation about the 10 metre net was made at a recent meeting of the Club de Radioamateurs de l'Outaouais.

This "gathering" is intended to be bilingual, English and French, and conducted in much the same way as the Brownsburg repeater net (Lachute area) that we can hear on 2 m Sunday evenings at 8 p.m.

At time of writing, we were into our sixth week of trial, (September 15) and about to launch an official opening on September 21. So, why don't you dust off your 10 m rig and come and join us as the band is opening up for great fun. ✦

Notice of Motion

General Meeting
Thursday, October 15, 1998

A motion will be put to the club at the next General Meeting (October 15, 1998), to allocate \$222.00 for certain expenses that might be incurred in the organization of the annual variety show.

Ken Barry, VE3KJB, is planning this year's variety show and Christmas social, which will take place on December 17, 1998.

The expenses that might be incurred are as follows:

Rental of electronic piano	\$50.00
Rental of amplifier	\$25.00
Capital Chordettes fee	\$75.00
Video rentals	\$17.00
Incidentals	\$40.00
Total	\$207.00
Taxes on \$100.00	\$15.00
Total	<u>\$222.00</u>

Online Swap Shops

Excerpted from "A Hamfest Every Day," by WB2LC, June 1998 '73 magazine, the following is a list of Internet ham radio trading sites:

Ottawa Swap Net: <www.igs.net/~swap>
Ham Trader Home of Radio/Electronic Classifieds:
<www.hamtrader.com>
Virtual Hamfest: <www.vhamfest.com>
Amateur Radio Classified Database:
<www.sarrio.com>
Ham Radio Classifieds:
<www.QTH.com/classifieds.html>
Drake List:
<www.min.net/%7Eethom/drakelist/index.html>
Contesting On-Line Radio Swap:
<205.217.100.14/RadioSwap/Search.htm>
Ham Radio Trading Post:
<www.RING.com/trading/hamradio.htm>
ARRL: <www.arrl.org/ads/RadiosOnline>
Amateur Radio Swap List:
<www.kacweb.com/swaps/radio>
Ham Radio/Electronic Ads: <www.westes.com/ads>
Amateur Radio Trader: <www.amradiotrader.com>
The Radio Finder: <www.radiofinder.com>

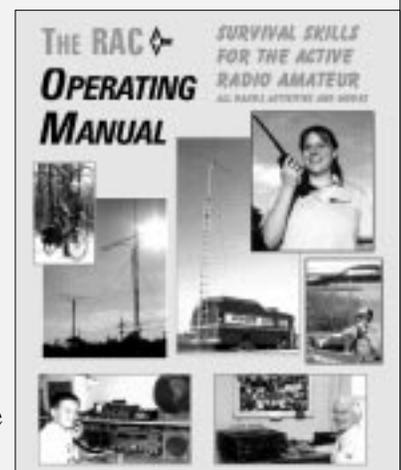
New All-Canadian Operating Manual Now Available!

RAC Bulletin, September 14, 1998

RAC is proud to present the new 200-page *RAC Operating Manual*. Edited by Doug Leach, VE3XK, this is a complete survival guide with sections covering all aspects of Amateur Radio operation in Canada, including:

- The Amateur Radio Service — the national and international perspective;
- Licensing — the Canadian structure and how it works;
- Privileges and Restrictions — what you can and can't do;
- Operating the Amateur Radio Station — procedures and hints;
- Amateur Radio Station Equipment — what you need to know;
- Specialized Communications — the digital modes, television, satellites;
- Propagation — what to expect on the HF, VHF, and UHF bands.

The *RAC Operating Manual* is available in the Ottawa area at Bytown Marine, 5 Corvus Ct., Nepean, 723-8424. For more information, visit the RAC web site at: <www.rac.ca>. ❖



NiCad and Gel Cell Care for Dummies

Part I

by Len Gelfand, VE3LGZ

Cadmium and lead are toxic

Always dispose of NiCads and gel cells as hazardous waste. Never dispose of NiCads and gel cells in regular garbage.

If you can't get to the trail road or another hazardous waste site, or to a scrap company that will accept nicads or gel cells, bring them for disposal to Len, VE3LGZ, at 749-5101 or Ernie, VE3EJJ, at 728-3666. ❖

BACKGROUND

To help you understand, here is some theory to remind you of a little of what you had to know to pass the written Radio Amateur exam. Knowledgeable readers should skip this part and avoid being offended by the oversimplifications.

Cells vs. batteries

A battery consists of two or more cells connected together. A cell is the individual container from which you can get electricity. That cylindrical object you put into your flashlight is a cell.

In English, it is usually and incorrectly called a battery. When you put two or more cells into your flashlight, you have created a battery.

The cell has two terminals; one is positive, labelled +, the other is negative, labelled -. Almost all batteries are made by connecting the positive terminal of one cell to the negative terminal of another cell so that the voltage of each cell adds to the voltage of the other(s).

Voltage is the pressure with which the cell pushes

electricity into whatever is connected to its two terminals. This pressure is measured in volts. The thing connected to the cell (or battery) is called the load. The bulb is the load for the cells or battery in your flashlight.

Current

The rate of flow of electricity or current is measured in amperes. It is the electrical equivalent of water flowing from a tap. As you change the position of the tap, the rate of water flow changes.

The rate of electrical current can also change. For example if you substitute a halogen bulb for the standard bulb in your flashlight, the current from the cells will increase because the halogen bulb allows more amperes to flow (and your batteries will have a shorter life).

Ah, I see

The cell's capacity, or length of time it can supply a specified current before it is empty, is measured in Ampere-hours (Ah). For example, in theory, a 1 Ah cell will supply 1 ampere for 1 hour, or 1/2 ampere for 2 hours or 1/5 ampere for 5 hours.

The reverse is true for a rechargeable cell. Theoretically, a 1 Ah cell can be filled (fully charged) by sending one ampere into it for 1 hour, or 1/2 ampere for 2 hours and so on.

When dealing with values less than 1 ampere, we usually speak of milliamperes (mA) which are 1/1000 of an ampere. So a 1 Ah cell can also be called a 1000 mAh cell. A 1/2 Ah cell is a 500 mAh cell and so on.

Most nickel-cadmium AA cells, or batteries containing AA cells used by Radio Amateurs are rated around 600 mAh.

(Ed. - Look for Part II in the November Rambler). ❖

Yesteryear

A look at *Ramblers* past,
by Larry Wilcox, VE3WEH



Some of the problems that plague Amateur Radio today are certainly nothing new. In reviewing the March 1988 *Rambler*, deliberate interference on the Trans-Provincial Net was a problem. Bill, VE3OAI, then President of the OVMRC, reported a "lid" had deliberately interfered by tuning up on frequency, using loud and obscene noises. Bill cautioned, "Remember, don't reply to anyone without a call sign and report any incident to the authorities."

Declining check-ins

These days, we also seem concerned about declining numbers of check-ins on local nets. Well, seems like it has always been a problem! The Vice President, Ian McIntyre, VE3CZ, noted the Pot Hole net had only 10 check-ins. Hugh, VE3WM, commented that when he was in London, they had only 3 or 4 check-ins from a membership of 160 and he believed that the days of HF nets were over! I wonder if Hugh Clarke is still of the same opinion?

The March 1988 *Rambler* contained the annual call by the Ottawa Amateur Radio Club for submissions for the Joe Norton Trust Award for Amateur Radio and the award for this year was \$780. I'm curious about who won this award in 1988. Unfortunately, there is no mention of the winner(s) in the April to June 1988 issues of the *Rambler*.

Cool sked

The April 1988 minutes mention that Allan, VE3LNH, had a sked with VO1SA/UAO (Canada/USSR Transpolar Ski Expedition), and that Soviet officials would be present for the filming of the radio contact at VE3JW.

Paul Cooper gave an excellent presentation on various aspects of DX operation. "Essentially a DX contact is one where the operator has had to exercise good operating skills, whether it is done using a linear and beam to reach a remote corner of the globe or using QRP and CW to reach Europe. The essential requirements for DX include: A good DX operator, a

good antenna, a good location and of course, a good rig with adequate filter capability to separate desired signals from others, etc."

I presume they had all the right ingredients to make the contact from VE3JW on this historic occasion.

Somehow I think DX contacts were more satisfying 10 years ago; no Internet DX Cluster postings to find out what DX stations have been heard and are on the air with their frequencies posted!

Prices 10 years ago

A full page ad by Atlantic Ham Radio Ltd. offered the ICOM line: IC-271, 2 Metre, 25 watts, all-mode transceiver, Clear out Special \$1099 and the matching IC-471, 430-450 MHz, 75 watts, all-mode, for \$1499 and the IC-27A, 25 watt, \$499 and the IC-27H, 45 watt version, \$539.

The back side of this page has an Amateur Crossword puzzle created by Treasurer, Henry, VE3OMU. It is very intriguing and could be a challenge to anyone. Perhaps the Editor could reprint it again when space permits?

The *Rambler* for May 1988 reports on packet radio with guest speaker Dick Atkinson, VE3JBO, of the Ottawa Amateur Radio Group Packet Radio Group.

Repeaters, repeaters

Two "backbone" repeaters on 145.010 had been installed, VE3NCR in Ottawa and VE3DVQ at Lavant. The Pioneer Amateur Radio Club had also installed VE3KBR.

A local packet repeater, VE3OCR, at Carleton University was operating on 145.070 and a bulletin board was on VE3JF. A satellite link between Ottawa and Calgary was under way. Telesat Canada donated the satellite for 18 months use to provide an opportunity for local packet to extend their range of operation. ♣

Potpourri

Sampling of news and comments from sources across Canada and around the world, compiled by Jacques Choquette, VE3TSC



American Technology Corporation (<www.atcsd.com>) sells small battery/solar-powered radios and flashlights that would be useful in emergencies, e.g., AM/FM US\$35, solar lights US\$40. (*ATC web site*)

Timewave Technology Inc., (<www.timewave.com>), renowned for its DSP products, now has an upgrade for the PK-232 TNC. This easily installed upgrade (\$125 US) adds DSP filters to its various modes, thus giving better reception of weak or high traffic signals. (*Timewave web site*)

August 21, 1999 may cause GPS units to develop problems in time/date and positioning information. This potential difficulty may result due to the "date value" in the hardware, which will have reached its maximum limit.

If purchasing a GPS, ensure that you have a written guarantee that it will function properly past this rollover date. More information is available at <tycho.usno.navy.mil/gps_week.html>. (*The Canadian Amateur*)

The University of Virginia (<www.cira.wvu.edu>) is developing a small doughnut-shaped antenna (Contra-wound Toroidal Helical Antenna or CTHA) that is able to send/receive signals to/from any direction while not being affected by obstacles, allowing it to operate at great efficiency, regardless of position or direction. (*Pioneer ARC, Ottawa*)

With the downfall of communism, capitalistic wheeling and dealing had to be inevitable. A Captain of the Ukraine Armed Forces understood that communications systems were in high demand, so he began selling off army radio equipment piece by piece to radio amateurs. The military court rewarded his success in business with six years in prison. (*Monitoring Times, August 1998*)



A new amendment makes Virginia the only state in the U.S.A. to override ordinances against Amateur Radio towers. Though local regulations are allowed to regard screening, placement and health/safety, "it shall reasonably accommodate Amateur Radio antennas." Basically, maximum limits are 200' in rural areas and 75' where it is populated.

(*State of Virginia*)

It seems the British idea to use electricity lines to provide high speed Internet hit a snag when lights using the same power lines turned into rogue radio transmitters.

Physical similarities between the street lights caused them to act as antennas. According to *New Scientist*, "If this technology were to be used, sections of the radio bands could be swamped, disrupting emergency communications, annoying Amateur Radio and interfering with the BBC World Service."

(*The Canadian Amateur, September 1998, K2DO*)

The Rocky Mountain VHF Plus net is alive and well at 02:00 UTC on 144.22 MHz using upper sideband and is quite popular and averaging at least 15 check-ins from the Rockies to the Mid-West states. (*VHF Reflector*)

Pat Gowan, G3IOR, reports that, after a short period on 145.935 MHz, Mir voice and packet operations within range of the United Kingdom have returned to 145.985 MHz. He does not know why the other frequency was tried. (*G3IOR*)



One holidaying ham looking for contacts had put into his scanner all the local VK3 repeaters, left it on scan for five days and during that period heard just seven stations. A highlight was to work a Victoria VK5 mobile who had his call sign in the rear of his car announcing he was listening to 146.55 simplex. Let's hope our VK2 friend has better luck next time he takes a vacation.

(*Graham Kemp, VK4BB*) ♣