

marcOgram

Official Publication of The Montreal Amateur Radio Club Inc.
Box 53047 - RPO Dorval, Dorval Quebec H9S 5W4



Volume 66, Number 4

January 2020

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 28 January 2020

Ragchew and Fleamarket: 19:30
Club meeting: 20:00

St. Ignatius of Loyola Parish Church

4455 West Broadway (corner of Terrebonne) in N.D.G. - Montreal

**** Eamon VE2EGN, on LT spice ****

Details on the electronic circuit simulator.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Welcome to 2020. So far, it looks much like late 2019, but I appreciate the symmetry of the numbers representing it.

The radio classes have started, and are being held in the Pine Beach Citizens Association facility as St. Ignatius of Loyola had no rooms available. We have about 8-9 eager new students.

MARC is still looking for an appropriate space in which to hold our hamfest in April. Anyone with ideas please contact Jim, VE2VE.

MARCOgram can always use more material. Somebody out there must surely have something about which to write an article, and photographs / diagrams are always appreciated.

73 de Nora, VA2NH

- . . . -

The Picture

Headline Story Issue: 2020-01-15
History Blue Collar North Humour Radio
by Carey Marshall
courtesy What's Up Yukon FaceBook Page

With all of today's technology, it's amazing how some stories stay under the radar. The times are rare when you trip over a situation in which the lifeblood of a powerful government agency was dependent on one ordinary Joe. Without that help, the agency's main program was in jeopardy of going down the tubes. An eye-catching photo hangs on the wall of a Whitehorse home, confirming such an incident.

It was an exciting day for me when I discovered the photo around a decade ago. After having trouble programming new channels into my VHF radio, I went

(Continued on page 7)



UPCOMING FLEAS/EVENTS

2020

What: HAM-CON

Who: Radio Amateurs of Northern VT

When: Saturday, 22 Feb, 2020

Where: Holiday Inn Convention Center,
South Burlington, VT

What: VE3CJ Memorial Spring
Fleamarket

Who: Burlington Amateur Radio Club

When: Saturday, 29 Feb, 2020

Where: Burlington ON

What: Ham-Ex 2020

Who: Peel and Mississauga AR Clubs

When: Saturday, 28 Mar 2020

Where: Brampton/Caledon, ON

What: Iroquois ARC Fleamarket

Who: Iroquois Amateur Radio Club

When: Saturday, 4 Apr 2020

Where: Iroquois ON

What: 44TH Annual Durham Hamfest

Who: North Shore ARC & South
Pickering ARC

When: Saturday, 25 Apr 2020

Where: Pickering, ON

What: NEAR-Fest XXVII

Who: New England Amateur Festival,
Inc.

When: Fri & Sat, 1 & 2 May, 2020

Where: Deerfield Fairgrounds
Deerfield, NH

What: 36th Annual Smiths Falls Flea
Market

Who: Rideau Lakes AR Club

When: Saturday, 9 May, 2020

Where: Smiths Falls, ON

FOR SALE:

From the Estate of Pierre Lafortune, VE2ANH SK

Kenwood TS-820s transceiver.

With manual. In quite good condition as Pierre was very meticulous. Contact Jim, VE2VE.



Production Manager

Edward Wielgus

D.C.S., B.Eng., M.Eng., VE3VMF

Montréal, Quebec, H2K1J2, Canada

Fax.: (514) 360-2956

ed_die.2@Hotmail.com

Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter

ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

Marc-André VE2EVN visits Ireland.

compiled by the editor from FaceBook posts.

11 Dec 2019:

An exhausted Marc-André is in the air, on his way to Dublin, capital city of Ireland. Aviation security was intense.



14 Dec 2019:

Marc-André visits the North Dublin Radio Club EI0NDR meeting, held at the Artane Beaumont Family Recreation Centre.

[Photo 1]



(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

22 Dec 2019:

My first Irish and overseas activation of EI/IE-072 as EI/VA2EI on Dec 22nd. Successful with 5 contacts on 2m using 5w HT FT1DR. It was breezy, but had a nice hike with my XYL. Thank you to EI6FR Declan Craig for spotting assistance on SOTA Ireland.

[Photos 2]



24 Dec 2019, Christmas Eve:

My second Irish activation was Great Sugar Loaf - EI/IE-022 as EI/VA2EI on Dec 24th in company of Declan, EI6FR. Declan initiated me to the realities of Irish coastal weather. We were lucky and avoided the rain.

This was also my first Winter bonus ever, for a total of 9 points. 4 QSOs on 2m and 5 on 20m. Had a great time. Thank you Declan Craig, for a great outing.

[Photos 3 and 4]



4 Jan 2020:

By Declan Craig EI6FR.

So plan was to help our Canadian visitor Marc EI/VA2EI earn his 100 point SOTA cert and his first 10 pointer plus winter bonus in EI. The Met forecast was for gentle wind and sunny, could they be wrong? You bet they could. Arrived at starting point for Tonlague EI/IE003 to very strong winds, rain and very poor visibility. After a short wait and a slight improvement and Declan EI6FR, Nicky Mullally EI9JF and Marc EI/VA2EI were off up the hill. Near the summit we found some shelter behind a boulder and set up a CW station, KX1 and EFHW and an SSB station MCHF SDR transceiver and linked dipole. Both antennas were very close but 90 degs to each other so simultaneous operation was possible although some mutual interference was unavoidable. The TX from the SSB station would cause problems to the CW keyer so apologies if this and frozen fingers caused poor CW to be sent at times. Nicky EI9JF made his first SOTA QSOs so will soon be doing his own activations. After 45 mins we were all very very cold so had to QRT. Thanks to all our Chasers and see you from the next summit.

[Photos 5 and 6]



Photo 1: North Dublin Radio Club EI0NDR

Photo: Sarah O'Sullivan



Photo 2: Activation of EI/IE-072 as EI/VA2EI



Photo 3: Great Sugar Loaf - EI/IE-022 as EI/VA2EI
Photo: Declan Craig, EI6FR



Photo 4: Great Sugar Loaf - EI/IE-022 as EI/VA2EI



Photo 5: Tonlague EI/IE003 as EI/VA2EI.
Photo: Declan Craig, EI6FR



Photo 6: Tonlague EI/IE003 as EI/VA2EI
Photo: Declan Craig, EI6FR



Érin go bragh.

INVITING MARC TO BCQP 2020

De Rebecca VA7BEC, BCQP Contest Coordinator

Happy New Year! I hope 2020 has started out well for you and yours.

I'm writing today to invite MARC members to join Orca DXCC in the next running of the British Columbia QSO Party, coming up in a couple of weeks. I realize that horrible CONDX is a major deterrent to participation and other same-weekend on-air events may offer greater QSO potential., but I'd encourage members to keep an ear out for BC stations calling "CQ BCQP". Even a few QSOs might be enough to capture a lovely certificate. Maybe even the Top Canada Outside BC plaque?

In addition, last year there were so many log submissions from outside BC that we were able to offer certificates for top score in category of entry according to state/province/DX. Let's hope that participation levels are as high or better so lots of operators get something nice for the shack wall. :)

Please distribute this email to membership. Details for BCQP 2020 are below. If anyone has questions, I'm just an email away.

GL and 73!

Rebecca VA7BEC va7bec@rac.ca
BCQP Contest Coordinator

DETAILS

Date/Time: 1600z Feb 1 to 0359z Feb 2 AND 1600z to 2359z Feb 2;

Objectives: Stations outside BC have to find as many VE7/VA7s as possible in the 20 hours of the contest. BC stations will be taking calls from anyone, anywhere.

Exchange: BC stations give RS(T) + three-letter code representing the federal electoral district in BC and stations outside BC give province/state/"DX".

◆ Collectible, original photo certificates for top scores in all classes, BC and outside BC. New photo every year! Plus, BC-themed keepsakes.

◆ Plaques awarded in 10 sponsored categories:

Top YL,
Top BC single-op,
Top BC multi-op,
Top US,
Top Canada outside BC,
Top DX,
Top Mixed Mode,
Top CW,
Most Federal Districts Contacted ,
Top Club in BC.

◆ BCQP is fully supported by N1MM contest logging software, CQ/X GPS-enabled software for mobile contesting, N3FJP state QSO party logging programs and several other generic programs. Any software that creates a Cabrillo log is OK but the content MUST show the required information. See the rules for details.

◆ Follow links at <http://orcadxcc.org/bcqp.html> for rules, multiplier list, FAQs, in-depth event analysis/ reports and scores from past years, and examples of photo certificates and plaques.

◆ BCQP runs in two segments:
12 hours on Saturday and 8 hours on Sunday.

That's Saturday, 1 Feb 11am to 11pm, UR time 1600z Feb 1 to 0359z Feb 2;
and
Sunday, 2 Feb 11am to 7pm, UR time 1600z to 2359z Feb 2.

The segments are NOT split by mode. Operate PH, CW and/or digital as you wish, on one day or both during the designated blocks of time. Everyone can work all 20 hours of the contest or a few hours on Saturday and a few hours on Sunday, or just Saturday or just Sunday. Completely up to each person. There is no required off-time, but there can be NO activity during the gap between the 12-hour block on Saturday and the eight-hour block on Sunday.



(Continued from page 1)

to get some help from Ron Tull, a ham radio enthusiast, at his Porter Creek home. We went into his radio room and he immediately started to sort out the problem with my radio. Trying not to distract him, I started to explore the room quietly. There were all kinds of radio thing-a-ma-jigs on shelves that looked like electronic gobbledygook to me. I turned and looked on the wall by the workbench when I spotted a spectacular picture.

Spilling out of the framed beauty was the Russian space station, Mir. The Earth served as its backdrop. "Where did you get the picture?" I asked. "The Russian Space Agency gave it to me for helping them out," he said. He went on to tell me how he had attracted the interest of the Russians. After looking at the details again a decade later, there's no doubt that Tull rescued the Russian space station from a dire situation on a winter day in December 1998.

"MAYDAY- MAYDAY- MAYDAY. This is Mir-ROMIR. Are there any ground stations out there with access to emergency assistance?" It was around 1 p.m. in Whitehorse when the old radio pro, Tull, picked up the unusual call. Thinking the call was a pre-planned exercise and they were waiting for a reply from someone specific, he hesitated to answer immediately. After hearing no response, he answered. "This is VY1RT in Whitehorse, Yukon. Is this a practice exercise?"

The response from MIR was immediate. "This is not an exercise." They informed Tull that they had an emergency and were dealing with an oxygen leak and a complete loss of power. Without power they were unable to communicate with ground control. A battery-backup powered, two-metre amateur radio was their only source of communication. It was a dire situation and ground control's assistance was desperately needed. Tull's help was requested to relay a message to the Russian Space Agency (RSA), informing them to set their radio on the amateur radio frequency 145.825.

Since they orbited the earth every 74 minutes, they stressed that the message would have to be expedited quickly, and they would have a 14-minute window to radio in on the next orbit for an update. Tull asked them to stand by and he started to organize a game plan on the fly. He recruited Bill Champagne, an

experienced amateur radio operator for backup, just in case his radio missed part of the transmission because of radio interference. Even though Tull went to great effort to identify himself and state clearly that he was a member of search and rescue, the minute he started to mention the space station, the skeptical RCMP dispatcher had an inkling that she might be dealing with a looney tune. "You got to be kidding," she said at first.

"No, I am not kidding. I have a priority message that came from space," Tull replied. He described the details to the dispatcher, about what had happened to Mir, and emphasized that they were in a desperate situation. He gave her further details and explained that the Russians needed the RCMP's assistance to relay the information to NASA so they could pass it to the RSA. After explaining when Mir's orbit time would be over Whitehorse again, he pointed out to her that he needed the information relayed, and also a return confirmation back from the Russians, ASAP. The dispatcher informed Tull that they would get with the program and try to make everything fall into place as quickly as possible. All he could do was wait and hope no bureaucratic roadblocks popped up. He also wondered how the crew were coping with the oxygen leak in the black expanse of 400 below.

The response was a model of decisive jurisdictional cooperation when it took the dispatcher less than an hour to call Tull. The dispatcher confirmed that the Russians had received the information and they were standing by on the proper frequency. After thanking the dispatcher, Tull informed her that he would call her back, confirming that he had made contact with Mir. He had set an alarm to remind himself when Mir would be back in radio range. He reached for his radio, and called "ROMIR, this is VY1RT."

After they responded promptly, he informed a relieved crew that their message had been delivered and he would notify the RSA immediately that their message was received. There was nothing more to do but wish them good luck. He returned the call to the RCMP, telling them to send confirmation to the Russians that the message had been received. The circle had been completed. It had been a job well done on all fronts.

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

A few months after the radio rescue, Tull received a package in the mail. The package contained a card and letter written in Russian and English, thanking him for his valuable assistance. Also in the package was the picture. One has to wonder what would have happened if that emergency call had gone unanswered. That spectacular picture should remind us to look up. They are up there at this moment floating in that cold endless ocean of emptiness, seconds away from disaster at any time.



The Picture.

A thank you for assistance to MIR.

Photo: Carey Marshall

