

# The Feedline

Niagara Peninsula Amateur Radio Club Inc. September 2009

Hello Everyone: I hope all of you enjoyed your summer and had the opportunity to complete all of your Ham projects. Were you able to hang that new antenna? Perhaps you had the good fortune to acquire a treasure at one of the summer hamfests.



Once again we had a good turnout for the corn roast at John VE3CNF and Shirley's home. We had the good fortune of a beautiful sunny day. John and Shirley hosted a wonderful event and we should be thankful for their hospitality. As a token of appreciation John and Shirley were presented with a very nice plaque from NPARC. Pictures of John VA3BOZ and Kevin VA3KGS presenting the plaque are available on the club website.

I will take this opportunity to thank the outgoing executive members for their hard work and commitment to the club last year as well as the support they have shown to the incoming executive.

I'm looking forward to the upcoming first regular meeting with great anticipation. I wonder what new challenges are in the future for this club. One area we need to improve is that of recruiting new members. It would be great news to see an influx of both newly licensed hams into the club along with past club members. We need to look at why members sometimes let their membership expire. Why new hams to the area sometimes don't become members. Perhaps they don't know we exist. I believe we need some fresh ideas to spark some interest both for enticing new members and perhaps sparking the interest of current members. This likely sounds easier than it is to do. I remember a short while ago when David VE3BBN had an interesting idea to launch a balloon with some APRS tracking type device mounted to it. I don't recall the exact details of the project. It seemed to me that he had a difficult time gathering interest for the project and I believe he shelved the idea. What a huge disappointment that must have been for David. As I think about that project now, I myself did not offer much encouragement or help although I thought it was a very interesting project. I ask myself why was that? Was I too busy? I may have been busy but I doubt I was too busy. It seems that although sometimes a new idea sparks some interest in us it is easier to sit back and watch from afar.

We need to change that concept. The strength of any club can only come from within itself.

Perhaps what the club needs is to have some new ideas to spark the interest again. If you have any ideas please let us know about them. It may be an idea that gets someone else excited about amateur radio again. A daunting task perhaps but I challenge you to become involved.

How do I plan to be more involved? What ideas do I have? One idea is that I plan to be more active with portable HF operations. During the summer I acquired a Buddipole for HF operations and used it to 'activate' the two lighthouses in Port Dalhousie. More of these mini operations will be planned and all members will be invited to come out and operate. After a few years as a returning member myself and watching from my comfortable chair on meeting nights I realized that there are members who may not have much HF experience. Hopefully these mini operations will get them out to operate. As I reassemble my station this fall I hope to get some resonant antennas up for 2m and 440 MHz. You'll hear me more often on the club repeaters. Something I haven't done in a long time. I may even check into the Tuesday night ARES net that Peter VE3HM hosts. You may not see this as much of a plan but for me it will be a big change to shift some of my radio time from HF to the VHF world.

Those are a few small things that I plan to do in the immediate future to help promote interest in amateur radio. I'm sure more will follow. We all need to ask ourselves what we can do to promote this hobby and the club. No matter how small an idea may seem, the result could be tremendous. There are plans on the internet to homebrew Bud-dipole type antennas. Perhaps this could be a club project. Do you have ideas for a club project?

The club is always looking for guest speakers. Please contact one of the executive members if you have suggestions. What about you as a guest speaker? One only has to look around at a club meeting to see a room full of people with varied interests and experiences.

/Contd. overleaf

Niagara Peninsula Amateur Radio Club, Inc.  
P.O. 20036 Grantham Postal Outlet, St. Catharines, Ontario L2M 7W7

**President's Message (/Contd.)**

I'm confident that all of you have something to offer. Perhaps you don't feel comfortable in the role as a guest speaker thinking you don't have enough material to talk for an hour. We could always have two guest speakers at a meeting, each one providing ten or fifteen minutes on a subject. Up to the task? Let us know.

Everyone needs to think about the upcoming public service events. They will be upon us faster than we expect and I'm sure Peter VE3HM will be looking for volunteers. It goes without saying that the Big Event is one of the most important public events for the club. I believe John VA3BOZ has taken over the responsibility of organizing it and I'm sure we'll be hearing from him at the September meeting. We look to our members to help make this a successful event. Whether it is volunteering or organizing your own table your participation is appreciated.

I will see you at the September meeting and look forward to the upcoming year. 73,  
Dale VE3LVW  
President NPARC

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**Minutes of the June 11th 2009 NPARC Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 19:30. The meeting was held at the Legion on # 20 Highway in Fonthill. After the usual round of introductions was made there were 32 members and 1 guest present.

A motion was made to adopt the minutes of last month's meeting as written in the Feedline. The motion was made by Jim VE3BCA and seconded by Dave VE3FOI. The motion was voted on and passed.

The treasurer's report was given by Kevin VA3KGS; a motion was made by Jim VE3BCA and seconded by Andy VE3NDF that report be adopted as read. There was no opposition.

Jim VE3VLS stated that there were two get-well cards at the sign-in desk and he requested that all present sign the cards as both members are seriously ill and in hospital. Dale Va3LVW spoke on the preparations for upcoming field day and stressed the need for band captains to prepare themselves with a shelter and radio and whatever else was need to properly run their bands. The region has again allowed us to borrow 3 generators with the notice

that this is the last year they will have generators as they are being declared surplus to region needs and being auctioned when we return them. Dale has made a request that any press or related items be directed to him or Dave Digweed VE3FOI. At present there will be 6 stations operating.

Peter VE3WET spoke on the upcoming Canada Radiothon. It was also decided that letters be sent out to our MP's and MPP's, especially since bill 118 will have a direct impact on ARES and hams in general.

David Wilson VE3BBN stated that Dave Lawrence VE3ORP, an expert on Ground wave and NVIS communication will be in this area soon to give a demonstration, with the venue and dates to be firmed later.

Jake VE3NCL, our repeater tech, spoke and he and Dave Hodson VA3UL have got VE3NRS temporarily running without the controller as the controller was sent back to California to have the smoke put back in (repaired).

Kevin VE3RCN spoke briefly on the upcoming 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Royal Canadian Navy and the ongoing preparations. They plan to have an active RCN station in each province plus there will be a number of active navy vessels in the Great Lakes using their military calls during this time. This will take place between March and June 2010. Details are to follow in RAC and QST. Kevin VE3RCN will also keep us informed. The rest of the meeting was turned over to Peter VE3HM as this is election month.

Jim VE3JXD (See "Silent keys" below).

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**Silent Keys**

Since the last Feedline (June 2009) and now, we have had four local Hams become "Silent Keys".

They are:

VE3DNT Albert Hutchinson Fonthill  
VE3WGE George Ecclestone St. Catharines  
VE3WT Ray Maude St. Catharines  
VE3JXD (also used VA3JV) Jim Demo St. Catharines

Our best thoughts and wishes go to all the members of their families and friends. We will miss you.

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## 2009 Canada Day Radio-Thon for Charity

### Another Radio-Thon For Charity Success

The Niagara Peninsula Amateur Radio Club, Inc. held its second Radio-Thon for Charity this past Canada Day 2009 and it was another success. \$656.00 was raised for charity. The CNIB Amateur Radio Program received cheques and cash in the amount of \$430.00 and the St. Catharines General Hospital Foundation received \$226.00. Total funds raised the past two years now totals \$1,336.00. Thank-you.

During the Radio Amateurs of Canada, Canada Day Contest, an open house was held at the station of Peter, VA3WET. Many local amateurs dropped by to make donations and to help make contacts with amateurs across Canada. Those local amateurs were: Kevin, VA3KGS; Rick, VA3WU; Sue, KG4SUE/VE3; Peter, VE3HM; Geddie, VE3CJX; Peter, VE3PET and Dale, VE3LVW. Despite the less than ideal band conditions, 80 contacts were made from British Columbia to Newfoundland and Labrador. Most contacts were in the 80 meter and 20 meter bands using a 10/15/20 meter dipole at 20 feet and a Butternut vertical for 10/15/20/40 and 80 meters. All contacts were by voice (or phone) and using 100 watts of power or less.

The purpose of the Radio-Thon for Charity is not only to raise funds for local charities but to raise public awareness for amateur radio, the Niagara Peninsula Amateur Radio Club and the Radio Amateurs of Canada. It is a fun and social event to take part in. If you are an amateur and wish to get involved with this worthwhile community project next year or have your club get involved, contact Peter at [va3wet@rac.ca](mailto:va3wet@rac.ca) for information to help you run your own local Radio-Thon for Charity. Please note that any charity in your area with a Charitable Registration Number qualifies for your support.

Thank-you to everyone who participated and everyone who made pledges. Your donations will make a difference.

For photos from the event go to [http://www.pbase.com/nparc/canada\\_day\\_fund\\_raiser](http://www.pbase.com/nparc/canada_day_fund_raiser).

Peter VA3WET

## SATERN Information

The SATERN (Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network) Niagara will take part in the SET (Simulated Emergency Test) on Oct 3rd. from 0900 hrs to 1200 hrs local time, VE3SAS will be set up in St. Catharines Salvation Army Headquarters. I will also need some operators in Fort Erie and Welland. If anyone lives in those locations and wishes to help out with some radio communications please send me an email [ve3foi@yahoo.ca](mailto:ve3foi@yahoo.ca) or see me at the next club meeting.

Also, if there is anyone in the St. Catharines or Niagara Falls area and would like to be involved you are invited as well. Our primary repeater will be VE3WCR. We will also be involved with the local ARES group at the same time.

**SATERN 75 meter Net:** Mondays at 2100 hrs local (9:00 pm) on 3742 KHz plus/minus QRM, we are trying to have a broader approach to SATERN and so we are having other areas check in. Net Control is Rick VE3NUZ. We hope to have as many Niagara area operators check in as well. 73

Dave Digweed VE3FOI, VE3SAS SATERN (Niagara)  
Director

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## Editorial comment

Hello again! Summer is now just about over and so another NPARC season starts. We now have a new executive and there will probably be some changes to our club as the year unfolds. I for one will be involved with other activities throughout the winter and so Geddie VE3CJX has agreed to create the Feedline every second month, starting with the October edition. We trust we will see you all at the first meeting on Thursday September 10th.

73, Denis, VE3KVE and Geddie, VE3CJX.

**PS**—We're always ready to receive information from members, about your shack; your antennas; your experiences on the air. Just email them to: [feedline@nparc.on.ca](mailto:feedline@nparc.on.ca)

**WE NEED A FEW GOOD HAMS**

In case you haven't noticed it, there have been several important changes in our hobby.

Those of us that have been hams 10 years or longer have noticed a big change on the amateur bands. It used to be that the repeaters were a bee-hive of activity. I can remember driving to my job in Beamsville with 2 metres in the car. I would be on the air all the way to Beamsville for about a half hour in the midst of a round-table discussion with 4 or 5 people. Many of you will remember Ivan, VE3FTZ, Harry, VE3BSA and others sharing a round table on 2 metres. We all took our turn, to have our say.

Today, 2 metres has changed, nowhere near the activity we used to know. The computer has changed all that. Much of the hamming is done on Echolink, Skype and CQ100 or something else. Not at all on ham frequencies.

Something else has changed. Agencies such as the Red Cross, Salvation Army, local Fire Departments and even Brock University have suddenly expressed intense interest in emergency communications. This is due to a number of things.

In June 2008 Brock University held a symposium on emergency preparedness. A symposium is a serious discussion, something like a town hall meeting among those that would be involved in a serious disaster. Local agencies were invited. Such partners in disaster management would be EMS (the paramedics), Fire Departments, Red Cross, Salvation Army and others.

Prominent among those invited were Amateur Radio representatives. Each group was encouraged to give a 10 minute address on what each would do in the event of a serious disaster. After the speeches we all sat around for lunch and discussions. I was amazed at the interest among the other groups in ARES and in Amateur Radio.

Prominent was the interest Brock University had in ARES and Amateur Radio. I was greeted by Ed Blasinski, VE3ITH. Ed is the Telecommunications Manager at Brock. From time to time he has attended meetings here at NPARC. He is from the Falls and some of you may know him. On the spot, he offered to fund a complete ARES ham station in the EOC at Brock. EOC stands for Emergency Operations Centre. This ham station is presently under construction as part of the Brock Campus Police building.

The equipment has been purchased and Frank, VE3SQ, has programmed in all the ARES channels on the ICOM 208 transceiver. Frank has a neat program to put in all 30 channels by computer. He says he can do it very quickly.

Another reason for the interest in emergency communications was the urgent need for communication during the Swissair disaster at Peggy's Cove, N.S. ARES Halifax was a communication lifeline between all the fire departments and EMS groups. The problem was that they all operated on their own frequencies. They couldn't talk to each other. ARES put a ham with each fire or EMS group and then they could talk to each other. ARES brought them all together. This greatly impressed many officials.

In October of 2006 Ft Erie had a sudden unexpected snow storm very early in the season. The weight of snow on tree limbs brought tree branches down en mass. The city of Ft Erie was plunged into darkness as hydro failed. Telephones were knocked out due to system overload. A shelter was set up in the Leisureplex Centre on highway #3. ARES was there on VE3RAF and 5 other channels. The local fire chief was impressed with what we can do and ARES leaders have had several meetings with him since then.

Our local ARES group is in crisis, we don't have enough ham radio operators. Other services are clamouring for our frequencies. The best way to defend them is to show government officials we need to keep them. Come out to the NPARC meeting September 10th., and find out what you can do to help out.

**WE NEED A FEW GOOD HAMS**

73 Dave, VE3DVE  
ARES EC for St Catharines.

**GWEN SET August 2009**

Greetings all, I was made aware of the interest in the recent exercise of Niagara GWEN in which the participants were Geddie VE3CJX, Peter VA3WET, John VE3EJP, Alex VE3ALS and David VE3BBN (NCS for Niagara GWEN).

The conditions for the SET were the most grueling I have ever come across in 58 years of playing with radios. The atmospheric conditions were out of this world causing the group to use any and all skills they could muster to achieve their goal. With this aside I feel that under these conditions we achieved a great success in communications even though we did not verify a true ground wave link. The constant S9+ level of atmospheric conditions would not allow us to be cognizant as to whether or not we had achieved our goal, but still communications were established between Niagara, Port Dover and London and traffic was passed. This success was guaranteed in most part by our portable station comprised of Peter VA3WET and Geddie VE3CJX. This test proved one thing, and that is that under the worst possible conditions imaginable ARES GWEN Niagara can pull it off.

Kudos to Peter and Geddie and a slap on the back to the rest of the participants who were able to sit in their cushy radio shacks and still be part of the action.

I would also like to thank the other stations who witnessed the event and gave us signal reports based on their perspective and position, they were John VA3BOZ, Joe VE3ABG, Rick VE3WU, Bob VE3HNN, and please forgive me if I have failed to mention any others that may have been in the noise.

In the future this test will be done again under better conditions to achieve the ground wave link. I know it is possible as the distances have been proven previously that it can be accomplished. By then our numbers and sections hopefully will have increased and our dream of an EmComm transprovincial link will have been realized. We hope that by doing these tests and getting them written up in the TCA that others may see the good that can be done in a time of crisis and be willing to set up a group in their own areas.

cheers  
David VE3BBN  
NCS GWEN Niagara

**(Photo's taken at the GWEN SET on next page)**

**ARES Niagara**

I am please to announce a new call in the area. Brock University now has an ARES ham radio station - **VA3BRK**

The station will be housed in the EOC (Emergency Operations Centre) for Brock, located in the Campus Police Building, the Kenmore Centre.

Maybe we can get some new hams at Brock when the "Twitter" and "About Face" (i know the real name) craze is over.

I want to thank Ed Blasinski, VE3ITH, for his efforts in getting this through. By the way, Ed is the Telecommunications and Networking Manager at Brock. You should see the list of "Jobs to Do" he has on the wall. It is literally wall-paper. I don't know how he got the time to work on this. Ed has been an occasional visitor at NPARC so you may recognize him.

More news at Brock to follow 73

Dave, VE3DVE  
EC St Catharines

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**The Ontario VHF Association**

The Ontario VHF Association (OVHFA) holds an annual get-together every fall at Humber College in Etobicoke. This years event will be held on September 24th. We have guest speakers giving talks on VHF/UHF/Microwave subjects. It's also an opportunity for like-minded VHF/UHF/Microwave enthusiasts to fraternize, and for those who are just getting interested to chat with more experienced operators and gain some knowledge. There is also a mini-flea market.

Please see <http://home.cogeco.ca/~ovhfa/> for more information and to download a PDF of the information sheet.

Forwarded by Peter VE3HM

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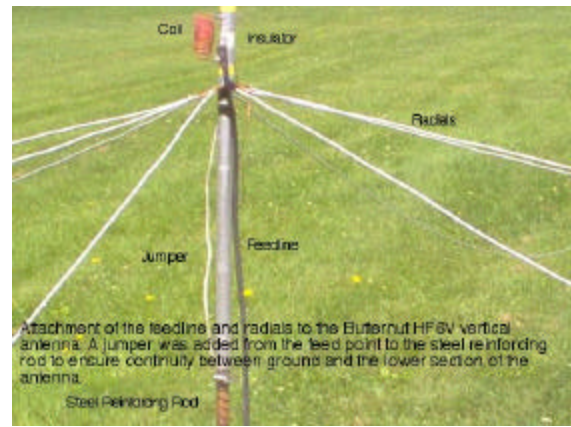
**Photo's taken during the GWEN SET taken at Silver Lake Park, Port Dover. Sunday August 9th 2009.**



Ceddie, VE9CJX stands in front of the equipment loaded GWEN Niagara Transport vehicle at Silver Lake Park in Port Dover on Sunday, August 9th, 2009.



The GWEN SET station at Silver Lake Park in Port Dover on Sunday, August 9th, 2009.



Attachment of the feedline and radials to the Butternut HF6V vertical antenna. A jumper was added from the feed point to the steel reinforcing rod to ensure continuity between ground and the lower section of the antenna.

Steel Reinforcing Rod



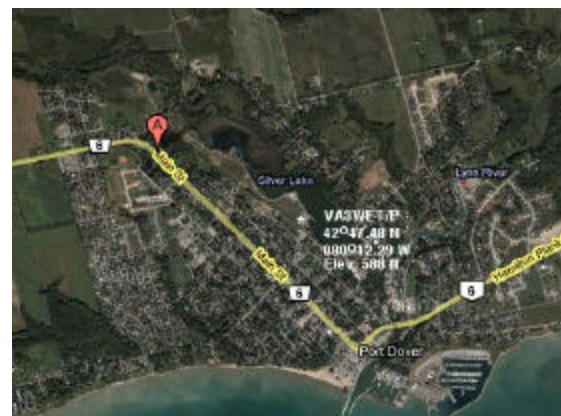
2 metre, 4 element beam approximately 4 feet off the ground in Silver Lake Park, Port Dover pointed towards London, Ontario. No contacts were made with London using Sideband or FM. Contact was made with Rick, VA3WJ in Thorold, Ontario off the back of the beam and using Sideband. Call signs were exchanged only as communications was very difficult.



GWEN Niagara Transport Vehicle packed up and ready to move out from Port Dover as thunder storms approach from the west on August 9th, 2009.



Another view of the Butternut HF6V vertical antenna at Silver Lake Park in Port Dover, Ontario on August 9th, 2009 during the GWEN Simulated Emergency Test.



## Amateur Radio and Lighthouses

This summer I had the opportunity to participate in the ILLW QSO party week. For those not familiar it is a week-long event to promote Amateur Radio and Lighthouses. The concept was to contact operators transmitting from Lighthouses. As long as I can remember I have always had an interest in lighthouses and thus my interest in the ARLHS. (Amateur Radio Lighthouse Society).

A few years ago I started 'chasing' lighthouses on the HF bands and later decided to join the ARLHS. Often I can be found on 20 and 17 mtrs looking for a new lighthouse and having worked one, hoping to receive a QSL card with a nice photo or background info about it.

This was going to be the year that I started to activate lighthouses myself. I planned to start 'activating' some of the local ones, namely in Port Dalhousie. Sometime in the future I hope to do so in other areas of the province or country.

As with all great plans there are usually some setbacks. My first few operations would not be without setbacks. Although minor - they did happen. The idea was to have a simple antenna, an old transceiver, a portable power pack and a portable mast. We were good to go or so I thought. I used a Buddipole antenna and I'm very happy with the performance although it takes awhile to tune it. For those unfamiliar with the antenna it operates from 2 to 40 mtrs, one band at a time. To change bands you must lower the antenna, move some jumpers on the traps, and adjust the length of the whips. It was while tuning the antenna on the bed of my truck that setback number one happened. You see, SWR meters work very well - until you drop them off the side of your truck onto the pavement below. At this point we had everything connected ready to go - just the antenna needed to be tuned but the SWR meter is in pieces. With the pointer needle bent beyond recognition and no tuner in the old TS430 I had to guess at the SWR.

Slow down, take your time setting a portable station together and all will likely be ok. A lesson learned. With setback number one out of the way, there is no chance for anything else to go wrong. Correct? Not so. With everything ready and the antenna possibly tuned or at least close to

being tuned it was time to call "CQ ARLHS". As I sat in the front of my truck it took a few minutes before I said to myself - Where is the logbook, paper and pens? They're not with me so they must be back at home. Setback two is now confirmed. You may not see it as an issue but I enjoy logging and consider it an important part to my amateur radio experience. It's time to take down the antenna, disconnect everything, drive home, get the missing log essentials and head back to Port Dalhousie. Always looking for the positive side of things I considered this one more time to practice setting up the portable station.

Another lesson learned. I'm the type of person that has a list made for everything. I don't know why I didn't have a list of things to take with me but I have one for the next time.

All in all I had a lot of fun operating portable from Port Dalhousie activating CAN540 and CAN541 lighthouses. A few curious onlookers asked what I was doing. I even had a few people stop by saying they were aware of ham radio because they had a relative that was a ham. One fellow in particular stopped by who said he always wanted to become a ham but never had the time. I told him about the classes that David VE3BBN teaches and gave him an NPARC business card left over from Field Day. Hopefully he pursues his desire to become a ham and enrolls in the class. Rick VA3WU stopped by and we had a nice chat about portable operations and antennas. It was nice to have a club member stop by and show some support for this mini operation. Not only was this a fun experience for me it did provide a small bit of NPARC exposure to the public. Every small bit of PR regarding ham radio is worthwhile in my opinion.

Hopefully I'll be back at CAN540 and CAN541 soon and with any luck I won't need to learn lesson three, whatever it may be.

Once I'm there I'll be listening for your calls .....  
Until then, 73,  
Dale Ve3LVW

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## NPARC 2008 – 2009 Executive

<b>President:</b>	Dale Sackfie	VE3LVW	president@nparc.on.ca	
<b>Past President:</b>	John Boswell	VA3BOZ	past-president@nparc.on.ca	
<b>Vice-President:</b>	Geddie Pawlowski	VE3CJX	vice-president@nparc.on.ca	
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Kevin Smith	VA3KGS	treasurer@nparc.on.ca	
<b>Secretary:</b>	Art Kennedy	VE3AEK	secretary@nparc.on.ca	
<b>Public Relations:</b>	David Wilson	VE3BBN	public-relations@nparc.on.ca	
<b>Special Events:</b>	Peter Vince	VE3HM	events@nparc.on.ca	
	and	Jim Servos	VE3VLS	events@nparc.on.ca
<b>Repeater Committee</b>				
<b>Chairman:</b>	Bob Miller	VE3HNN	repeaters@nparc.on.ca	
<b>Bulletin Editor(s)</b>	Denis Grantham	VE3KVE	feedline@nparc.on.ca	
	and	Geddie Pawlowski	VE3CJX	feedline@nparc.on.ca
<b>Web Site:</b>	Peter Vince	VE3HM	website@nparc.on.ca	
<b>Forum:</b>	Kevin Smith	VA3KGS	forums@nparc.on.ca	
<b>SATERN Liaison:</b>	Dave Digweed	VE3FOI	satern@nparc.on.ca	
<b>Repeater Tech:</b>	Jake Voogt	VE3NCL	repeatertech@nparc.on.ca	
<b>Ham Class Instructor:</b>	David Wilson	VE3BBN	instructor@nparc.on.ca	
	<b>Examiners</b>	David Wilson	VE3BBN	examiner@nparc.on.ca
		Ron Kramer	VE3MX	examiner@nparc.on.ca

### NPARC Repeaters

VE3NRS	147.240 MHz +	PL Tone	107.2 Hz
VE3RNR	443.175 MHz +	PL Tone	107.2 Hz
VE3WCR	147.300 MHz +	PL Tone	107.2 Hz
VA3NRS	224.580 MHz +	PL Tone	107.2 Hz

## NPARC Meeting Schedule for 2009 - 2010

Meetings are held monthly, September to June, 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm  
 Royal Canadian Legion hall, Branch 613, 141 Hwy 20 East, Fonthill, Ontario. All are invited to attend.

Thursday September 10 <sup>th</sup> 2009	Guest speaker (various)
Thursday October 8 <sup>th</sup> 2009	Guest speaker
Thursday November 12 <sup>th</sup> 2009	Guest speaker
Thursday December 10 <sup>th</sup> 2009	Guest speaker
Thursday January 14 <sup>th</sup> 2010	Guest speaker
Thursday February 11 <sup>th</sup> 2010	Guest speaker
Thursday March 11 <sup>th</sup> 2010	Guest speaker
Thursday April 8 <sup>th</sup> 2010	Guest speaker
Thursday May 13 <sup>th</sup> 2010	Guest speaker
Thursday June 10 <sup>th</sup> 2010	Guest speaker Club elections night—no guest speaker