



# FEEDBACK

## The Official Newsletter of the Georgian Bay Amateur Radio Club



June 2021

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## President's Message

John VA3KOT

Our summer break is almost here. The club takes a break from meetings every summer during the months of July and August so that we can all enjoy our vacations during the nice warm weather. For some of us that means getting away to the cottage, or going boating or, in my case, going camping in my trailer. And that leads me to talk about our last remaining club meeting, before the break, on Tuesday 22nd June.

I will be away camping in northern Ontario for that meeting. Due to the pandemic travel restrictions there has been a huge increase in demand for campsites this summer and my XYL Krystyna and I have had to grab reservations whenever we can. Our immediate Past President, TOM VA3TVA, has kindly agreed to step in and run the June meeting in my absence. I am sure Tom will use his experience of running the club for the previous two years and will do a great job. Thank you Tom!

I spent the winter and long months of lockdown perfecting my portable HF rigs. I have two rigs, both of which fit into backpacks. One is a QRP CW-only rig designed for rapid deployment. Despite often poor propagation conditions due to the solar cycle minimum that is slowly (actually - very slowly!) coming to an end, it is still possible to make QRP QSOs. Signal reports may be down a couple of S-units compared to QRO operations but for casual QSOs the object of the exercise is just to make contacts and fill up our logs.

My other backpack rig is a 100W capable Yaesu FT-891. I also carry a Bioenno LiFePO4 battery when AC power is not available and run the rig at 30 watts when on battery power. This is the rig that

### This Month

Presidents Message

[ARES Today](#)

Frank VA3GUF

[ARES Bruce County](#)

Marvin VE3VCG

[Interesting Websites](#)

[Meeting Minutes](#)

[March Zoom Meeting](#)

[Recycling](#)

[The Last Word](#)

### 2021/ 2022 Executive

President ..... John VA3KOT

Vice-President..... Tom VA3TVA

Treasurer..... Bobby VE3PAV

Secretary..... Rob VE3RWY

[Club Constitution](#)

[By-Laws](#)



I will be taking with me on my camping trips. Several members of the club share my interest in the Parks On The Air (POTA) program. POTA encourages participants to "activate" designated parks by making 10 or more contacts during the same UTC day. Due to the popularity of the program it is usually very easy to complete the 10 contacts - I have done it in as little as 20 minutes!

I will be visiting at least seven Ontario Provincial Parks in June and will attempt to activate them all. To find out more about the Parks On The Air program visit the website at <https://pota.app> and be sure to check the "spots" page. If you see my callsign VA3KOT please call me.

While our meetings take a break during July and August our Wednesday evening nets carry on as usual. We start at 7:30pm on the club repeaters VE3OSR and VE3GBT with an initial round of check-ins and discussion of a topic of interest chosen by the NCS (Net Control Station). The net then moves to HF on 3783KHz LSB. The frequency may change up or down by a few kilohertz if the main frequency is busy or getting QRM from a nearby frequency. The discussion topics have been very interesting recently! I am going to try and check-in to the HF portion of the net while I am away and I encourage everybody who has an HF rig to do the same. We may not be able to meet physically yet so our nets are an important way for us to stay active as a club.

I hope everybody has a very enjoyable summer and makes the most of the good weather to get on the air and have some radio fun!



## Join us for our weekly get together "On the Air"

The club meets each Wednesday evening on VE3OSR 146.940 T97.4 hz at 7:30 pm local time, and on 3.783 Mhz +/- immediately following. **Net Control Station**

**Volunteers WANTED**

**Send email to** [netmanager@gbarc.ca](mailto:netmanager@gbarc.ca)

net



# ARES Today

Frank VA3GUF

Reading many emails on individual thoughts about ARES shows that everyone is right in their perception and understanding of ARES and its challenges. The gist of one of Ham Radio motto's, "When all Else fails, Ham Radio will get the message through" is mostly not understood by the County and Municipalities Emergency Managers. They are correct that with the development and current deployment of cellular coverage services that there are small geographical coverage emergency scenarios that no longer need Ham Radio like they would have needed in the past when cells were technically not available.



For large geographical coverage area emergencies like the Texas power failure or Calgary flood, ARES is still the requirement and it is up to us as ARES EC's to demonstrate this in our presentations to these folks. Working with Grey County we have over the years been able to do just that and it is a slow process to communicate this through to the municipalities Emergency Managers, that are usually Fire Chiefs, to have a focus on this with their many other responsibilities, but we are making headway. As ARES EC supporting the County and Municipalities, emergency SETs they are required to exercise annually, except during COVID, is one way to help them understand what their emergency operational communication requirements are when their current view of comm's fails.

In one such SET a few years ago this very scenario came up during their SET when we were not invited and their SET came to a sudden end when all operation comm's failed. Our follow up conversation with the Emergency Manager was to provide some guidance and consultation as a second opinion to see what would and could work. Their emergency operation communication need that still needs some further detail and a question I often ask is, what is the Emergency operations Comm's structure of who communicates to whom and to what degree of urgency so that when ARES is called up, we as ARES EC's already have that understanding and coordinate the set up of such communication links. It is not easy as some emergency scenarios may need tweaking once we are on the ground and their immediate needs change to meet the emergencies unique situations.

Our ARES mission as HAM radio operators that are interested in supporting emergencies would therefore practice a variety of radio communication capabilities so that it is easy to step in and help with their operation comm's. One method available to us is participating as HAM Radio comm's at the community events GBARC is supporting such as the Bruce Peninsula Multisport Race or other GBARC supported radio events. These Ham radio events are organized by GBARC as an ARES event to practice the events communications and organization just as if it were an emergency. Yes we have plenty of preparation warning and comm's may be simple, most times limited to voice, but supporting events like the Bruce Peninsula Multisport Race that is a 100 kilometer long race covering a large geographical area using the GBARC ARES mobile repeater demonstrates our preparedness to support a larger geographical coverage emergency. This event also tests the mobile repeater in a variety of different set ups to see what works best and what does not work. While there are limited opportunities for supporting community events with Radio email or digital messaging, we should not stop trying to learn how to do these and practice them on HF as well as VHF. There is much we can



learn and apply on our own as enhanced radio skills but keep in mind, we will mostly be needed for operational emergency management voice comm's messaging. Therefore, being able to set up and operate independently where assigned in an emergency for a shift is one of the best things we can all train ourselves to do. Also keep in mind, when an emergency happens over a large geographical area, we will be supporting those that need us when we are not impacted by the emergency and they support us when we live through the emergency in our area taking care of our families and homes. ARES lives on as a means for the County and municipalities to have a prime point of contact to the HAM Radio community in their area in the event of an emergency need. ARES EC's will be able to access the emergency radio comm's needs by communicating with their county Emergency Manager prime point of contact at the start of the emergency. Ham Radio operators interested in supporting the emergency radio comm's just need to listen to their local repeater for news on any ARES requirements.

ARES is not dead, the links with ARES EC's are there and active.

Frank VA3GUF

## ARES Bruce County Marvin VE3VCG

As the new ARES Emergency Coordinator for Bruce County I thought it appropriate to share a few thoughts with members of GBARC. As I step into this role I am well aware that interest in Emergency Communications within the club is low. This point has been very clearly made in multiple discussions and statements.

I believe however that emergency communications should be one aspect of the operation of every amateur radio club including GBARC. EmComm capabilities are like a spare tire in your vehicle. You might never use it but you can't use it when needed if you don't have it.

ARES is built around supporting "served agencies" in an emergency. This arrangement typically involves amateur operators being set up in an EOC (Emergency Operations Centre) and passing messages. Multiple amateurs in multiple EOC locations, have in the past provided interoperability to agencies where such capabilities were missing. It is my understanding that this role is less important than it once was but still necessary under certain circumstances.

I feel that the way EmComm is done today needs to evolve and adapt to meet current needs and changing conditions. We need to broaden our idea about what EmComm really is and how it is best used in a real emergency. Doing this requires taking a step back to gain an objective and realistic view of what form EmComm should take in Bruce County.

In my view every licensed amateur is already an EmComm operator, everytime they key the mic, knowingly or not. During an emergency event even basic field reports using a cheap HT could be invaluable. But with better gear, working together as a team, we can do so much more.



Consider for a moment how quickly a simple and flexible ad hoc network could provide critical situational awareness for decision makers in an EOC as well as everyone else on frequency. The simplest gear, with a bit of training, could make all the difference.

I will be bringing to focus a specific set of EmComm services any radio operators can provide, to our served agencies as well as our communities. Such services are perhaps currently being overlooked or underused.

I am aware that my view of EmComm operations, especially in Bruce County is at variance with both local interests and with the traditional role amateurs have had in the formal EmComm arrangements we've had in the past.

However over the coming months I will be casting my net (pun intended) for volunteers to step up and participate in some local exercises. These will demonstrate several aspects of what I've described above.

I already have generated strong interest from some, but the more the merrier. Not only is there a practical use for such exercises, but these kinds of live field exercises and experiments can be enormous fun.

I'm working on such plans now, so keep watching the newsletter and forum's for updates.

Take special note of the forthcoming "RAT-flector" powered by DRATS software. In time this will create an online – off-line communications hub, with email, document sharing, messaging and chat functions available to anyone running DRATS. DRATS is free to download and use and will run on Windows and Linux. It's simple to use and, aside from the internal email service, it will also send Winlink messages.



I have a few bits and pieces to bring together before the RAT-flector is ready to go live, so watch for announcements.

Remember too, your experience is one of the most valuable resources. You make EmComm possible.

73

**Net Control Station Volunteers WANTED**  
Send email to  
[netmanager@gbarc.ca](mailto:netmanager@gbarc.ca)

**Websites of Interest** Copy/Paste the urls below into your browser

**Remote SDR V2 with Orange Pi and Transmit Capable**

<https://www.rtl-sdr.com/tech-minds-remote-sdr-v2-with-orange-pi-and-transmit-capable/>

**A phase-coherent software defined radio with five RTL-SDRs**

<https://www.crowdsupply.com/krakenrf/krakensdr>



# Minutes of Meeting

## GEORGIAN BAY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

Minutes of Meeting May 25, 2021

**Present:** David VE3BAK, Janet VA3EAC, Marvin VE3VCG, Doug VE3DGY, David VE3WI, Adam VE3FP, John VA3KOT, Phillip VE3QVC, Frank VA3GUF, Bobby VE3PAV, Tom VA3TS

Total members present: 11

Meeting was conducted online via Zoom

### Agenda:

- Quorum declaration
- Introduction to guests and new members (John VA3KOT)
- Presidents Report (John VA3KOT)
- Secretary's Report (Marvin VE3VCG for Rob VE3RWY)
- Treasurer's Report (John VA3KOT)
- Technical Presentations Update (John VA3KOT)
- Special Interest Groups Report (Marvin VE3VCG)
- New Business
- Close

### President's Report - John VA3KOT

A quorum was present on the basis that three Executive positions were represented at the meeting as well as at least three other members. No guests or new members were present.

Meeting declared open at 7:00PM EST (19:00)

Rob VE3RWY remains on medical leave and the club extends its best wishes for a speedy recovery.

Many thanks are extended to Bobby VE3PAV who, after serving for two and a half years, is stepping aside as club treasurer to deal with personal matters. Bobby has passed all club financial records to John, who has acted briefly as temporary treasurer up to and including this meeting.

Volunteers to fill the vacant position of club Treasurer were called for and Doug VE3DGY stepped forward. John VA3KOT thanked Doug and requested a conversation offline about the role.

### Secretary's Report – Marvin VE3VCG for Rob VE3RWY

John asked Marvin (temporary secretary) to present the minutes from the April club meeting.



The minutes are available to all via the club newsletter online.

A call was made for errors or omissions from the previous meeting minutes please note them now". and none was raised. John VA3KOT Motion: John asked that a motion be made to accept the minutes of the last meeting, Tom VA3TS made the motion, Frank Gufler VA3GUF seconded the motion.

### **Treasurer's Report – John VA3KOT**

John presented a spreadsheet which detailed the club's current financial state. The club income for the past year is \$817.00 dollars. The largest noted costs to the club, during the period covered by these financials, have been the rental of the post office box and the cost of insurance through RAC.

It was proposed that a contingency of \$1000 should be applied against the bank balance to cover emergencies such as the deductible on our RAC liability insurance in the event of a claim.

At present the current balance in the club account based on the most recent bank statement received from Meridian is \$xxxx.00 after allowing for the proposed contingency fund. This John It was noted means that the club is currently in good financial condition.

### **Technical Presentations Update – John VA3KOT**

Dave VE3WI is already scheduled to present a tech talk on Baluns and Chokes

He briefly mentioned some of the highlights of this upcoming talk.

John asked for volunteers to fill available slots for tech talks in the coming months in the fall. Marvin VE3VCG volunteered to do a tech talk on using the Mobilinkd TNC 3 for digital (packet) communications for APRS and AX25 KISS packet communications. Dave VE3WI tentatively volunteered to give a talk on using the nanoVNA for measuring the efficiency of chokes and baluns.

### **New Business – John VA3KOT**

The floor was opened for any new business. The first item was the creation of the Club Awards program involving certificates of recognition. These, John advised, would be announced in the forums. The object of the certificates is to acknowledge those who contribute to the club in a significant way.

Adam VE3FP asked about plans, if any, for field day. This opened a general discussion where Frank VA3GUF noted that owing to existing uncertainties about pandemic rules and restrictions it was already to late to organize any kind of group event.

John VA3KOT noted that he will be away camping on field day and will operate as a mobile station from his campsite. It was recommended and accepted that we would each operate individually during field day.

A suggestion was made that we record our field day station setup with a view to perhaps finding the most unusual.



Frank VA3GUF briefly mentioned the recent Red Cross exercise and the challenges faced because of having been provided the incorrect “tactical address” by the organizers. Frank further noted that discovering these kinds of mistakes is one reason why such training events are important.

The Zoom 40-minute time limit. This brought our meeting to a sudden if informal end.

As a result, these minutes will reflect that, owing to reaching the zoom time limit, it was not possible for further input from the club members and so as acting secretary I note that the meeting was informally closed owing to technical issues.

## Monthly 2021 Online Meeting

Our meeting schedules and updates are posted on our website at

<https://gbarc.ca/meetings.php>



# Recycling for the Ham radio Operator Tom VA3TS

Over the years one thing that always comes to mind is the lack of hardware for the various projects that I have done. Machine screws, lockwashers, standoffs and various bits and pieces to complete the latest project.

Anyone who has been unfortunate enough to find themselves online to purchase that rare but needed set screw or grommet knows that it adds up very quickly.



It is possible to go to the local hardware store but since Fulfords in Owen Sound don't carry all those little bits and pieces they have been relegated to the realm of "unobtainium".

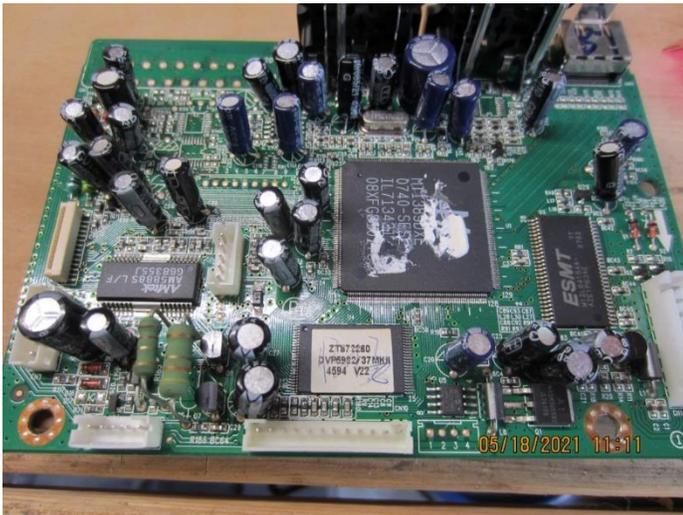
Recently I had a cd/dvd player go south on me and we have replaced it with a new one. The first thing that comes to mind is taking it to the local recycler and putting the whole thing out of mind.

AQs you can see, there isn't too much inside the box but maybe some items of interest can be found.



The picture to the left is the power cord and a small switching power supply. I tested this and it works as required. The voltages available are +12v, -22v and +5v. All in all a nice score for any little doodad I create.





This board has some spare caps and will find it's home in the junk box for future use. There was also some RCA jacks which may come in handy as well.

So this picture shows the nuts, bolts screws, a heat sink, rubber grommets and a red filter used for displays. A small handful. When added to what I already have means I never have to buy that 4-440 machine screw and nut.

Never throw anything out.



# The Last Word

A few words of appreciation to those that contribute to this newsletter by submitting news stories or interesting web links or ideas. If you have something then send it to <https://gbarc.ca/mailus.php> , any format, any size, anytime, but if you want it to appear in the current months newsletter, then send it by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month.



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<https://www.gbarc.ca/lists/?p=subscribe>

**Membership** for details regarding membership in the club go to:

<https://www.gbarc.ca/gbarcmembers.php>

The next newsletter will be in June 2021.

The next issue will be in September

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