

The

April 2026



# NARA Newsletter

## President's Message - Mason VE7PMD

This month sees the four-year anniversary of the *NARA Newsletter* in its present format. Sincere thanks to those members who have maintained the newsletter, month in and month out. It is recording NARA's activities and history and is always a most enjoyable read. Thank you to those involved with the production of the newsletter and to all those who have provided news and articles.

It is World Amateur Radio Day on Saturday Apr. 18. A chance to reflect on our exceptional hobby/service. A chance to make at least one over-the-air contact to celebrate this special day with radio amateurs from around the world. So many of us are bound together by the truly unique experience of amateur radio.

I also want to comment on the Mt. Copley reservoir site in the District of Lantzville, which NARA has been looking at for some years for amateur radio. During the development of the area and its access roads, Chris VE7TOP has been conferring with the District of Lantzville on behalf of NARA. Chris is certainly thanked for his extensive volunteer work on this matter. The NARA Executive have now looked at two versions of a legal agreement document for Mt Copley called a 'Licence to Occupy'. Both versions have given rise to concerns, and to be honest the proposed agreement was far more applicable to the resources of a professional communications company than an amateur radio club. NARA has taken informal legal advice and, after several recent meetings, the NARA Executive is of the opinion that NARA would not be able to agree to the terms of the latest licence document. There are many concerns involved with this decision. We also question the value of yet another repeater site and the projected costs involved for the club. The potential costs include those associated with the construction of towers and buildings/housings at the site by certified workers. There are also additional annual insurance costs and

Island Events for 2026	Date	By
NARA General Meeting	Apr. 9 (in-person)	NARA
808 Wing Pancake Breakfast	Apr. 19 at 9 am	808 Wing
808 Wing TGIS Lunch	Apr. 11, 11:30 am	808 Wing
Comox Flea Market	Apr. 12	CVARC
NARA POTA Activity	Apr. 18	NARA
NARA Fox Hunt	May 9 at 9:45 am	NARA
Field Day (ARRL)	Jun. 27-28	NARA
Canada Day Event/Contest	Jul. 1	NARA
Nanaimo Bathtub Race	Jul. 26	RNBS
NIARS Campout	Aug. 16-23	NIARS
Ham Happenings (Nanaimo)	Sep. 12	NARA
Canada Winter Contest	December	NARA

potential future liabilities, referred to as 'trailing liabilities'. Because of these and other concerns, the NARA Executive unanimously agreed not to proceed with this project.

In April, NARA starts its in-person (only) meetings again at 808 (Thunderbird) Wing. This month's meeting will be on Thursday Apr. 9 starting at 7 pm. While on the topic of meetings, NARA's Monday evening on-the-air net really does need additional controllers. If you can assist to spread the load, please email NARA at [its-net-controllers@ve7na.ca](mailto:its-net-controllers@ve7na.ca).

April also sees the start of some Spring/Summer events. The first is the Comox Club Flea market on Apr. 12. Also, the special NARA POTA event at Rath Trevor Park on Saturday Apr. 18. Since the NARA POTA event is the same day as World Amateur Radio Day, please consider visiting NARA to celebrate this significant day. I know that many NARA members will be operating at our POTA event. But if you are not operating please just come along for a visit and share some pizza or a hot dog with other NARA members. I hope to see you there.

## NARA's POTA Day at Rathrevor Park

Please join NARA's POTA activity day on Saturday Apr. 18 at Rathrevor Park near Parksville. This special activity day is part of the 'Support your Parks Weekend' and coincides with World Amateur Radio Day, so is a must for all NARA members.

Access from Nanaimo to Rathrevor Park is via Hwy. 19 at Exit 46 and the East Island Highway.

The beach picnic shelter has been booked by NARA for the day, which is a short walk from the main car park. NARA will be providing all of the equipment, antennas, etc., but do bring a chair, an umbrella and dress accordingly for the weather.

Come along to operate or just visit. Bring something to eat and maybe share some pizza or a hot dog with the NARA crew. **All are welcome.**



**April 18 - 11 am to 5 pm**



## COMOX Club Swap Meet - Apr 12

The date for the Comox Ham Swap Meet is coming up fast and takes place on Sunday Apr. 12 from 8:30 am to 1 pm. The venue is the Florence Filberg Centre at 411 Anderton Avenue, located in downtown Courtney. Admission is \$5 and this includes the normal door prizes. Last minute tables from Brian VE7RD at [sells795@telus.net](mailto:sells795@telus.net).



*The Florence Filberg Centre in downtown Courtney.*

## World Amateur Radio Day - Apr. 18

Radio Amateurs all around the world celebrate the founding of the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) in Paris on Apr. 18, 1925.

Some 25 countries, including Canada, met to form the IARU. Had it not been for this union amateur radio would certainly not be what it is today.

Following on from the formation of the IARU in 1925, there was a radio conference in 1927 in Washington. At that conference amateur radio gained access to the 160, 80, 40, 20 and 10m bands; the basic harmonically related amateur bands we know today.

Since 1927, and thanks to the work of the IARU, the Amateur Radio Service has now gained access to additional HF bands at 15, 30, 17, 12 and 60m.

Today the IARU plays a critical role with the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), an agency of the United Nations. National radio societies and the IARU defend our most precious assets, the amateur radio bands. Without our amateur bands, there would be no amateur radio.

Every radio amateur owes much to the IARU and their own national radio society; in our case the Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC). The value of these organizations should not be underestimated.



*The 2026 World Amateur Radio Day logo*

On World Amateur Radio Day itself, RAC official stations will operate across Canada (from 0000Z to 2359Z on Apr. 18). The RAC official station call signs are VA2RAC, VA3RAC, VE1RAC, VE3RHQ, VE4RAC, VE5RAC, VE6RAC, VE7RAC, VE8RAC, VE9RAC, VO1RAC, VO2RAC, VY0RAC, VY1RAC and VY2RAC.

## April 808 Wing's Pancake Breakfast

This month's popular 808 Wing's pancake breakfast is on Sunday Apr. 19. It runs from 9 am to 11:30 am. A number of NARA members plan to attend.

## NARA General Meetings

Starting this month, NARA returns to in-person general meetings at the 808 (Thunderbird) Wing at 719 Nanaimo Lakes Road, Nanaimo. Meetings are on Thursdays with a start time of 7 pm. The next three general meeting dates are: Apr. 9, May 14 & Jun. 11.

## Fox Hunt Reminder - May 9

A reminder that the NARA fox hunt, with a difference, takes place on Saturday May 9, starting at 9:30 am.

## VE7NFR-11 Balloon Launch on Apr. 1

On Apr. 1, if the weather holds, a high altitude balloon will be launched from Maple Ridge at 7 am. This will be a repeater balloon with an uplink on 446.150 MHz and a downlink on 147.580 MHz. There will be SSTV every 30 seconds. There will be APRS tracking on <https://aprs.fi/#!z=11&call=a%2FVE7NFR-11&timerange=3600&tail=3600>. Full info. from NFARC on <https://www.ve7nfr.com/index.html>.

## How is DX - David VA7DXX



The 3Y0K Bouvet Island DXpedition has been front and center during March. But before I get to Bouvet I really do want to mention the German operators DXpedition, J51A, to Guinea-Bissau in West Africa. I managed 15 contacts with this DXpedition on CW, SSB and digital modes. I worked them on all bands from 80m to 10m and was especially pleased with my 80m CW and 60m FT8 contacts with the group. Their signals with me were consistently strong on all bands with excellent operators. The group made a total of 254,200 contacts with 49,600 unique callsigns in 20 days of operation; a new DXpedition world record.



The Bouvet team caught a break with the weather and started serious operations as 3Y0K on Sunday Mar. 1. I was not able to get on the air that day but on Monday Feb. 2 I heard them on 40m CW at 549 and saw them on 40m FT8 early evening. I called on FT8, but with no success. One VE7 on the mainland with stacked Yagis on 40m made it on FT8. I tried again on 40m FT8 on Tuesday evening, but again with no success. My 40m dipole is end on to Bouvet so on Wednesday afternoon, in the rain, I put up a new 40m dipole which would fire at Bouvet. As NARA member Tom VE7TOM would say, you get extra gain by putting up antennas in bad weather! With the new Bouvet dipole up, success, I worked 3Y0K on 40m FT8 quickly followed by FT8 contacts on 80m, 20m and 17m the same evening. I had been getting up early (for me) to try to catch 3Y0K on the long path morning openings. On Saturday Mar. 7 this paid off. Within 30 minutes, two CW contacts with Bouvet on 20m and 17m CW. On Saturday evening I was also lucky enough to work Bouvet on 80m CW. For me all of the short path signals on the upper HF bands were weak with signals around S 2-4. I expected stronger signals on the short

path but this could well be because the 3Y0K location on Bouvet was screened in our direction by a 750m mountain. While only 16.8% of 3Y0K's contacts were with North America, their long path morning signals were much stronger reaching S9 levels.



*The Bouvet team getting ready to launch their helicopter to transport equipment and operators onto the island.*



*The 3Y0K Bouvet camp.*



Vancouver Island is well represented in the 3Y0K log with a number of stations making contacts. Special congratulations to Rick VE7TK in Victoria for working 3Y0K on 40m FT8. With this single contact Rick has now worked all 340 DXCC entities; an endeavor which can take decades. Rick and I were texting each other during the early 40m FT8 openings to compare signal strengths; again congratulations Rick, a significant achievement indeed. Also NARA members Tom VE7TOM and Tim VE6SH/7 have made contacts on

FT8. VE6SH/7 also made it on CW and from Alberta on 160m FT8; good going Tim. Kosta VE7AF worked 3Y0K on 40m FT8 with some other VE7s. Further afield on Vancouver Island, both big contest stations VE7ZO and VE7UF have made contacts as well. Also on CW, VE7CT (40m) and Ralph VE7XF (80m).

In passing, two other stations on Vancouver Island are awaiting their final DXCC entity. Myself (VA7DXX); I need to work the St Peter and St Paul Archipelago. This is a group of small islands about 950 kilometers off Brazil, occupied only by a few scientists and naval officers. There was to have been a DXpedition there last Fall, but it was cancelled because one of the permissions to land could not be completed. The other station is Ralph VE7XF in Comox, who needs to work Mt. Athos. Mt. Athos does have one monk there who is licensed, who occasionally gets on the air!

From an operational point of view Bouvet seems to have gone well; a testament to the team's detailed planning and previous experience with Bouvet two years ago. Using a helicopter to transfer all of the operators and equipment to the island really paid off and most certainly this DXpedition is seen as a success, with some excellent operating. As such, it could be a decade before this inhospitable island at the bottom of the world will be on the airwaves again. Imagine what an incredible experience it must have been for the entire Bouvet team, including the radio operators. Something they will always remember as being so special. I wonder if you could ever see yourself being part of such a DXpedition? Canada was certainly well represented by the DXpedition's co-leader, Cezar VE3LYC.



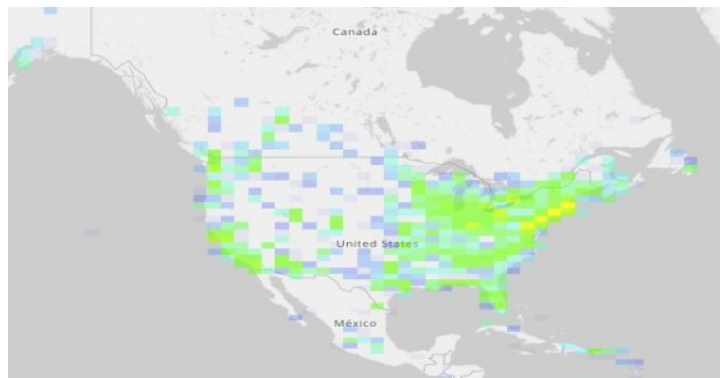
*The Bouvet team safely back on the ARGUS after their DX-trip. Cezar VE3LYC sporting his Canadian flag in the bottom row.*

From my perspective, the Bouvet DXpedition was a

success. Success for having nine contacts with this rare island with five new bands on FT8 and three new bands on CW. Although quite unexpected, I really was pleased to work Bouvet on 80m CW and 60m FT8. Would I have liked to have had more contacts on CW, yes, but like most DXpeditions these days there seems to be a predominance for digital activity.

For me propagation predictions proved to be a reliable guide to what to expect, and so it is always a question of the DX station being on the right bands at the right time of day. Also accepting that there is always going to be competition from stations far better equipped than oneself.

The short path to Bouvet from Nanaimo is some 16,200 kilometers, which by any standard is a long haul. The 3Y0K DXpedition made a total of 102,273 contacts of which 24,712 were unique call signs. The map below shows the distribution of contacts from 3Y0K in North America plotted by grid square. Once again, the eastern side of North America fared better from a propagation point of view. This is not just a population density thing and this was evident by listening to the large pileups.



*Distribution of 3Y0K contacts for North America. Some 16.8% of 3Y0K's contacts were with North America.*

So this rather special 3Y0K Bouvet operation finished its operations over the weekend of Mar. 14/15. We now return to all the other DXpeditions that continue to take place. During April expect the following Dxpeditons to be on the air; Rodrigues Is. (3B9N), Svalbard (JW), Bermuda (VP9KF), Fiji (3D2JK), Marquesas (TX9W) and Gambia (C5).

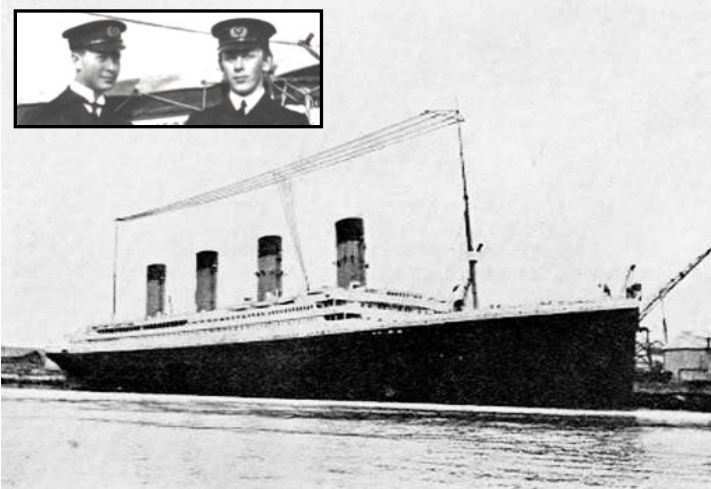
I did operate in the BERU (Commonwealth) contest on Saturday Mar. 14 for about four hours and made 70 contacts, primarily on 20m. It was really slow going, but nevertheless some really good DX.

## TITANIC Memorial Special Event Station Honors Telegraph Operators



On Apr. 14, 1912, the Royal Mail Ship TITANIC hit an iceberg on her maiden voyage from Southampton, England, while en route to New York City. There were 2,224 people on board when the iceberg was struck at 23:40 hours. The TITANIC, the largest ocean liner in service at the time, sunk 2 hours 40 minutes later on the following day, Apr 15, with a loss of 1514 souls.

The RMS TITANIC was designed to stay afloat if four of its forward compartments flooded. However, the glancing blow to the iceberg damaged the steel plates of six of the forward compartments. The crew used flares and sent wireless messages to summon help and the RMS CARPATHIA arrived 90 minutes after the TITANIC had sunk, rescuing over 700 survivors.



*The RMS TITANIC, showing the Marconi T antenna used on 500 KHz. The insert shows Jack Phillips (L) and Harold Bride.*

Shortly after the TITANIC hit the iceberg, the senior wireless operator Jack Phillips, age 25, and junior operator Harold Bride, began sending the standard Marconi distress signal 'CQD' on Morse code which meant 'all stations distress.' At the suggestion of Harold Bride, Phillips began sending the new international distress signal, 'SOS', marking one of its earliest uses. The RMS CARPATHIA received the distress call at 00:30 hours on Apr. 15 because its wireless operator Harold Cottam had not yet gone to bed. The CARPATHIA immediately turned and sailed some 90 kilometers through the icefields to rescue the survivors.

Although the TITANIC was sinking, its 5 kW Marconi

spark transmitter on 500 KHz (600 metres) continued to operate until shortly before the TITANIC submerged. Senior wireless operator Jack Phillips had been relieved by the Captain, but he stayed at his post until the wireless room started to flood. He tried to escape but lost his life to keep the emergency SOS transmission on the air. Junior wireless operator Harold Bride survived and he was able to assist the CARPATHIA's wireless operator to send messages and the names of the survivors to nearby ships and to Cape Race, Newfoundland.

Interestingly, the night before the RMS TITANIC sunk both of its wireless operators spent many hours repairing the 500 KHz wireless equipment. Their repair work was against company policy, but is credited for saving so many lives.



*The Radio Room on RMS TITANIC.*

Also of interest is the fact that Guglielmo Marconi, the inventor of wireless telegraphy, was offered free passage on the TITANIC for its maiden voyage. However, at the time Marconi apparently had a large amount of administrative work to do and sailed for New York on the RMS LUCITANIA three days earlier.

Special Event station using the callsign EG1912T (Spain) is scheduled to operate from Apr. 12-15. While it will honor all on board the RMS TITANIC, there will be a specific focus on the wireless telegraph operators Jack Phillips, Harold Bride and Harold Cottam. While EG1912T will operate on all bands and modes, CW (Morse code) will be favored.

In addition, W1MGY from the Salt Pond Visitor Centre at Cape Cod is also expected to be on the air. The letters 'MGY' was the three letter callsign of the RMS TITANIC.

## Artemis II



The Artemis II mission around the moon is now projecting a launch date no earlier than Apr. 1, 2026. Should a launch take place in April then three licensed radio amateurs, one of them a Canadian, plan to circle the moon. The Canadian on board is Jeremy Hanson, KF5LKU. A main aspect of this mission is to validate the systems on the Orion spacecraft.



## Bike Race 2026 - Cancelled

NARA has been attempting to get in contact with the organizer of the annual Mt. Benson unpaved bike race. When contact was finally made in mid March, NARA discovered that this year's bike around Mt. Benson had been cancelled.

## Scouts Presentation at 808 Wing

On Mar. 18, ten scouts with some parents and their scout masters from the First Nanaimo Scout Group were treated to an evening of amateur radio. The evening was organized by Darryl VE7DDU who started off the evening's presentations with a short introduction to amateur radio.



The scouts were then split into three groups for short 20 minute sessions on a range of topics.

The topics covered included Meshtastic, APRS, SSTV,



### NARA Coffee Klatches

Morse Code (CW) and satellites. There was also a visit to the VE7NA Club station which was of special interest.



*Scouts and their scout masters from the First Nanaimo Scout Group enjoying an evening of amateur radio.*

At the satellite demonstration, presented by Bruce VE7PTN, the scouts were especially interested in the tracking software and one group of scouts even got to see the International Space Station, through the clouds, as it passed overhead.

An interesting evening indeed, which gave NARA two new junior members, Jason and Nathan Tan. Thanks to all the NARA members who helped to make the evening a success.

## Windstorm at Lost Lake

The bad windstorm on Tuesday Apr. 24 caused a large number of power outages around the Nanaimo area. The NARA site at Lost Lake also lost power and this took out a BCWARN switch which NARA hosts. There was a good RF signal from the Nanaimo hospital to Lost Lake but the network switch had failed. The switch was powered up but was not responding to commands. Ian VE7HHS came over from Vancouver on the Hullo ferry with two new switches, one being a spare. Mason VE7PMD, assisted by Ian and Randy VE7FAA, swapped out the switch and the system is now back on line.

Day	Frequency	Time	Locations in Nanaimo
Tuesday	Weekly	10:30 am	South End Smitty's - 50, 10 Street
Thursday	3rd Thursday of each month	7:00 pm	Tim Horton's - 2320 Northfield Road
Saturday	Weekly	9:00 am	North End Smitty's - 2980 North Island Highway, Rock City Centre

## NARA's NVIS Propagation Tests - Mar. 22

NARA's Near Vertical Incident Skywave (NVIS) tests on Mar. 22 did not go entirely as expected.

The Mar. 22 NVIS tests were scheduled to be on the nearest Sunday to the Spring equinox which falls on Mar. 20. The Spring equinox is an astronomical event when the sun crosses the Earth's equator which means that days and nights are approximately of equal length worldwide. Since NARA's NVIS propagation tests require daylight, it was considered that the Spring and Fall equinoxes were suitable times of the year to conduct these tests during this changeover period. NARA will also conduct NVIS tests near the shortest and longest days in the year.

At the time of the Mar. 22 tests, the SFI was 107, the A index 33 and the K index was 7. During the three-hour test window there was a strong G3 geomagnetic storm. This was caused by several CMEs (Coronal Mass Ejections) from the sun during the previous week which hit the Earth. A G3 storm can cause satellite navigation issues and result in auroral activity down into the mid USA states.

NARA's previous NVIS tests have attracted well over 125 stations, but the Mar. 22 test only achieved 21 unique callsigns. This was an indicator of the poor propagation at the time of the test. While this is the first time that NARA's NVIS tests have coincided with a strong geomagnetic storm, this was nevertheless quite fascinating in its own right.

So what happened? Propagation experts may well be able to provide a much better analysis of the observed characteristics of the signals heard by VE7NA. In general terms signals were weak. There appeared to be several types of fading going on at the same time. For example, many multipath signals seemed to be combining and subtracting to calve up some of the speech of weaker signals. At the same time signals would vary in strength from the noise to S9 over a period of a few seconds. We know that D-layer attenuation would increase during the storm, but also could there be some play between reflecting E and F layers? Then we have the MUF (Maximum Usable Frequency). When a geomagnetic storm hits, after an initial increase the MUF will go down, but likely not enough to affect frequencies around 5 MHz.

The tests started off with an initial blank response to a few short CQ NVIS calls. Then a number of short range signals only, initially from VA7MPG, VE7BUF, VE7TOM, VE7PTN and from the brand new callsign of Andrea VA7VST. All of these signals were relatively weak with no fading, indicating ground wave propagation. Many of these stations had been consistently S9 in previous NVIS tests. VE7XF in Comox called but with extremely weak signals; in previous tests Ralph had been over S9 in strength.

From observing the intensity of the auroral activity, the storm did dissipate during the NVIS test period and we did work just a few US stations (KC7MRP, K7LJ and in Tacoma WB4SPV) and several stations in the Okanagan area (VA7EEH, VA7VOL, VE7KKG & VE7PAE), but not much else. Ivan VE7IVN has been a consistent signal during all of our previous NVIS tests. Apparently he could just copy VE7NA on SSB but he had to use CW to get his callsign through the poor propagation and increased band noise. Had we been set up to do so, we perhaps should have tried lower and higher frequencies with specific stations; next time perhaps. Towards the end of the three hour test period, the auroral activity started to increase again.



*Jack VE7GDE operating the VE7NA NVIS station on Sunday Mar. 22 at VA7DXX's QTH.*

Despite the poor propagation caused by the geomagnetic storm at the time of NARA's NVIS tests, we learnt a lot, but also acknowledge that we still have much more to learn about HF propagation and antennas at 60m. Thank you to all those who stood by to work VE7NA, who emailed reports of no reception and those who made contacts.

## The Satellite Downlink: SatNOGS Ground Station is Online and FO-29 is Active Again!

Bruce VE7PTN 

I am happy to report that my receive-only SatNOGS (Satellite Networked Open Ground Station) satellite telemetry ground station is now complete and officially “online”. In February, I got the turnstile antenna permanently mounted. During March, I completed the permanent installation of the receiving station and final testing. My station now appears on the SatNOGS Network website as available for tasking (<https://network.satnogs.org/stations/4461/>). This means that other SatNOGS users may schedule passes on my station. Within 24 hours of going online, a user scheduled a pass. Sadly, my station did not hear the satellite, but it’s a start. After working on the setup of my station over the last six months, it feels great to have it completed and online.



*The enclosure with Raspberry Pi, SDR, and bias tee LNA power injector in a permanent location in the attic at Bruce VE7PTN’s QTH. It is installed above soffit venting for air movement; however, summertime attic temperatures can be high and may require additional heat dissipation for the Raspberry Pi to operate.*



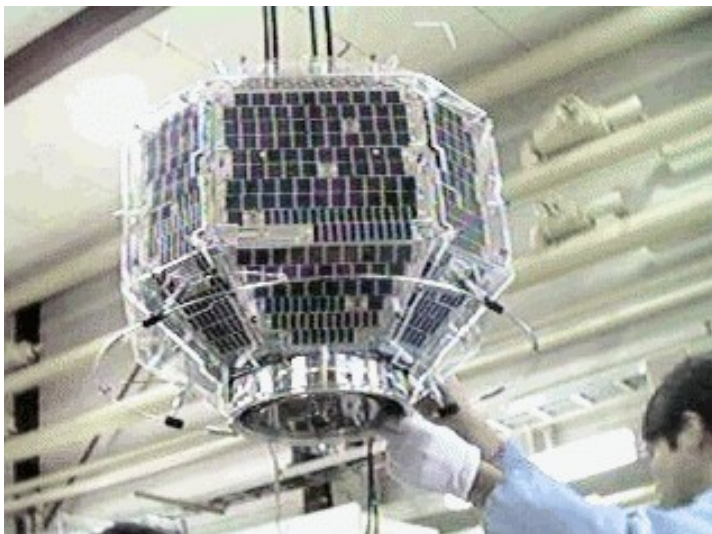
*Bruce VE7PTN completing the installation of the UHF turnstile antenna at his QTH.*



*The view from the UHF turnstile antenna built by Bruce VE7PTN. It has excellent horizon to the east and north.*

As I have mentioned before, “linear” satellites are great for serious satellite operators to make lots of contacts in a single pass. My record is 16 QSOs in a single pass, and I have heard some ops get into the 20s! The venerable RS-44 is the most popular linear satellite due to its reliability, long passes and strong downlink. A close second is the Japanese satellite JAS-2, commonly known as FO-29 (Fuji OSCAR 29). This satellite was launched in August 1996; so, its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary will occur this summer. Having been in orbit for so long, subjected to the harsh space environment, it is understandable that it has some issues. As is common with older satellites, its rechargeable batteries are worn out and will no longer hold a charge. This means that the satellite relies entirely on its solar panels for power. Due to the particulars of its polar orbit, it may experience long periods when it is constantly in the earth’s shadow for months at a time. When this occurs, the satellite’s linear transponder is switched off and is not available for QSOs. My last QSO via this satellite was back in August 2023. It had some short periods of availability since then for a few minutes or hours per day. But as of March this year, the satellite has transitioned to a period of continuous sunlight and is fully operational. I have just worked this satellite again and it still sounds great; obviously the period of sleep has done it no harm. It is the loudest linear satellite and with the largest passband (100 kHz or

about 20 QSO channels of 5 KHz), almost twice as wide as RS-44. So, it is a great bird for new and experienced operators alike. Its high orbit means that it can support a QSO distance of up to 7,500 km. I am looking forward to having it available for the summer roving season this year.



*The satellite FO-29 prior to its launch in August 1996. Photo credit: Canadian Space Agency.*

Another exciting piece of satellite news is the availability of a modern full duplex handheld radio. The full duplex ability means that a single handheld radio may be used to work satellites and allow the operator to hear the downlink while transmitting to the uplink. The last popular handheld to have this ability was the Kenwood TH-D72A, released back in 2010 and now discontinued. The new radio is the Anytone AT-D890UV (<https://dxcanada.ca/anytone-at-d890uv-walkie-talkie-dmr-fm-vhf-uhf-cross-band-sfr-bt-gps-aviation/>). Initial reports from satellite operators are promising. There have been some issues with firmware updates “bricking” some units. But the manufacturer says that the issue is now understood and fixed in the latest firmware update. As is typical with Anytone brand radios, it uses a “codeplug” file to define the radio configuration and frequency memories. Patrick WD9EWK has been testing the radio on satellites and has made a satellite-specific codeplug file available for download via Dropbox (<https://t.co/i4ME8IS8zF>). The radio is reported to transmit at up to 10W on VHF which is great for working satellites. It includes APRS, GPS and QSOs recording features. Along with the usual FM analog mode, this radio supports the DMR (Digital

Mobile Radio) digital mode. I don't yet have experience with DMR so this unit might be my first exploration of that mode if I decide to get one. It sells for about \$400 CDN making it relatively affordable as dual-band full-featured handhelds go.

**AnyTone**  
AT-D890UV



*The newly released Anytone AT-D890UV full duplex handheld radio. Photo credit: the Anytone website, <https://www.anytone.net/anytone-at-d890uv-dmr-dual-mode-digital-handheld-radio-vhf-uhf-air-band-am-rx-cross-band-repeater-ip54.html>.*

An ISS (International Space Station) SSTV (Slow-Scan Television) event is scheduled for April 10 to 14 (<https://www.ariss.org/upcoming-sstv-events.html>). This event is Series 31; it commemorates the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Yuri Gagarin's first flight and other space achievements. The frequency will be 437.55 MHz, and the SSTV mode will be Robot 36. This event is the first one from the ISS since the failed Series 30 event back in November 2025.

Like many hams, I find the HamClock software (<https://www.clearskyinstitute.com/ham/HamClock/>) very handy for keeping an eye on current band conditions and activity. It is also useful for working satellites with the pass tracking feature enabled. I was saddened to hear of the passing of its developer, Elwood Downey, WB00EW. HamClock will cease to function via the Clear Sky Institute web backend

(where the current info is communicated to the user installations) in June. As soon as the announcement was made, I could see that the satellite orbit data was no longer being updated (probably a manual process by Elwood). After 21 days, the program would no longer display any satellite pass information because it would be too old to be accurate. Thankfully, there are several replacement options available now. I decided to keep using the HamClock software but switch from the Clear Sky Institute backend to one provided at HamClock.com (<https://hamclock.com>). Before switching over, I updated to the latest version, 4.22. Then I used the “-b” flag to tell my installation to get its data from HamClock.com as per the instructions on their website. The trickiest part was finding how my Raspberry Pi was automatically launching the HamClock so I knew where to add the “-b hamclock.com:80” code. The website gives a few options to try; mine was the third one, desktop autostart. The switchover was a little unstable at first but eventually it settled down and it has been working fine now for weeks. More importantly for my use, the satellite orbit data are being updated regularly.

That’s all for this month. 73.

## NARA Training

Congratulations to two new amateurs who signed up to the NARA online course. The two new callsigns belong to Andrea VA7VST and Jonathan VE7TNS. Both got excellent marks for their Basic exam.

The NARA Training Group starts a seven week cadet only in-person training course on Apr. 1. The course is being held at the 808 (Thunderbird) Wing.

## Meshcore

In Meshcore, a ‘scope’ is a filtering mechanism used to control the propagation of messages. A scope tells the network the size of the area for messages. NARA members are testing out some new scopes with the new MeshCore v1.1.14 firmware. Three examples of scopes are Local, Regional and National/Global. The main three scopes are being applied to ‘vanisle’, ‘bc’ and ‘swbc.’

There are a few new Meshcore repeaters around the area and recently Andrew VA7ASI has moved the

Mt. Erskine repeater to a better location on Salt Spring Island.

## 808 Wing Spring Cleanup

Our hosts at the 808 Thunderbird Wing are carrying out their annual cleanup on Apr. 26 between 10 am and 4 pm. The Wing would welcome any members of NARA who would be available to assist. Hot dogs and chili will be provided. If you are able to volunteer please email Jack VE7GDE at [ve7gde@gmail.com](mailto:ve7gde@gmail.com).

## Monday Evening Net Controller Required

NARA is urgently looking for a volunteer to help with the Monday evening net on the Island Trunk System. It would likely mean a once a month commitment of about 30 minutes to host the net. The net operates from a script. The net starts at 8 pm and those interested in this voluntary role should email NARA at [its-net-controllers@ve7na.ca](mailto:its-net-controllers@ve7na.ca).



The volunteer group of NARA members producing this newsletter would like to thank all those who provided material for this month’s issue.

The deadline for the May 2026 issue of the NARA Newsletter is noon on Monday Apr. 27, with an intended publication date of Thursday Apr. 30.

News items, comments or articles for publication should be emailed to:

[news@ve7na.ca](mailto:news@ve7na.ca)