The June 2025

NARA Newsletter

President's Message - Randy VE7FAA

It's June already and Field Day is just around the corner. We are all looking forward to some great summer weather mixed in with several NARA radio events. I am hoping to see many NARA members at our summer events.

Field Day is over the weekend of June 28-29, and NARA will again be at Sunnus Farm in Cedar/Yellow Point. Please join us for some radio plus sharing great meals on Saturday evening and Sunday morning. A Field Day information package will be sent to all NARA members soon. In the meantime, see page 2 of this Newsletter for our Field Day quick summary.

But, before Field Day we kick off NARA's summer events with the MIVA bike race on Sunday, June 15. If you have not yet signed up to volunteer at this event you can still do so by contacting NARA at bikerace@ve7na.ca. The annual MIVA unpaved bike race takes place on logging roads northwest of Mount Benson and is always an opportunity to test our equipment and communication skills.

Just a few days after Field Day, NARA will host its RAC Canada Day event at VA7DXX's location near Ladysmith. I use the word event because Canada Day is more of a celebration than a radio contest. It is an opportunity to get together and socialize with other NARA members. An email will be sent soon inviting all NARA members to attend the Canada Day get-together. And now is a special time to celebrate everything that is Canadian.

Our summer events continue in July with the annual Bathtub race. Again, details will be sent out to those volunteering well before the race takes place.

Thank you again to everyone who is involved with organizing NARA's summer events and to those NARA members who support our club.

Island Events	Date	By
General Meeting	June 11 @7 pm	NARA
Bike Race (MIVA)	June 15	*MIVA*
Field Day (ARRL) Sunnus Farm in Cedar	June 28-29	NARA
Canada Day Event/Contest	July 1	NARA
Nanaimo Bathtub Race	July 27	*RNBS*
NIARS Campout	August 16-24	*NIARS*
Victoria Swapmeet	September 13	*WARA*
Canada Winter Contest	December	NARA

NARA's June General Meeting

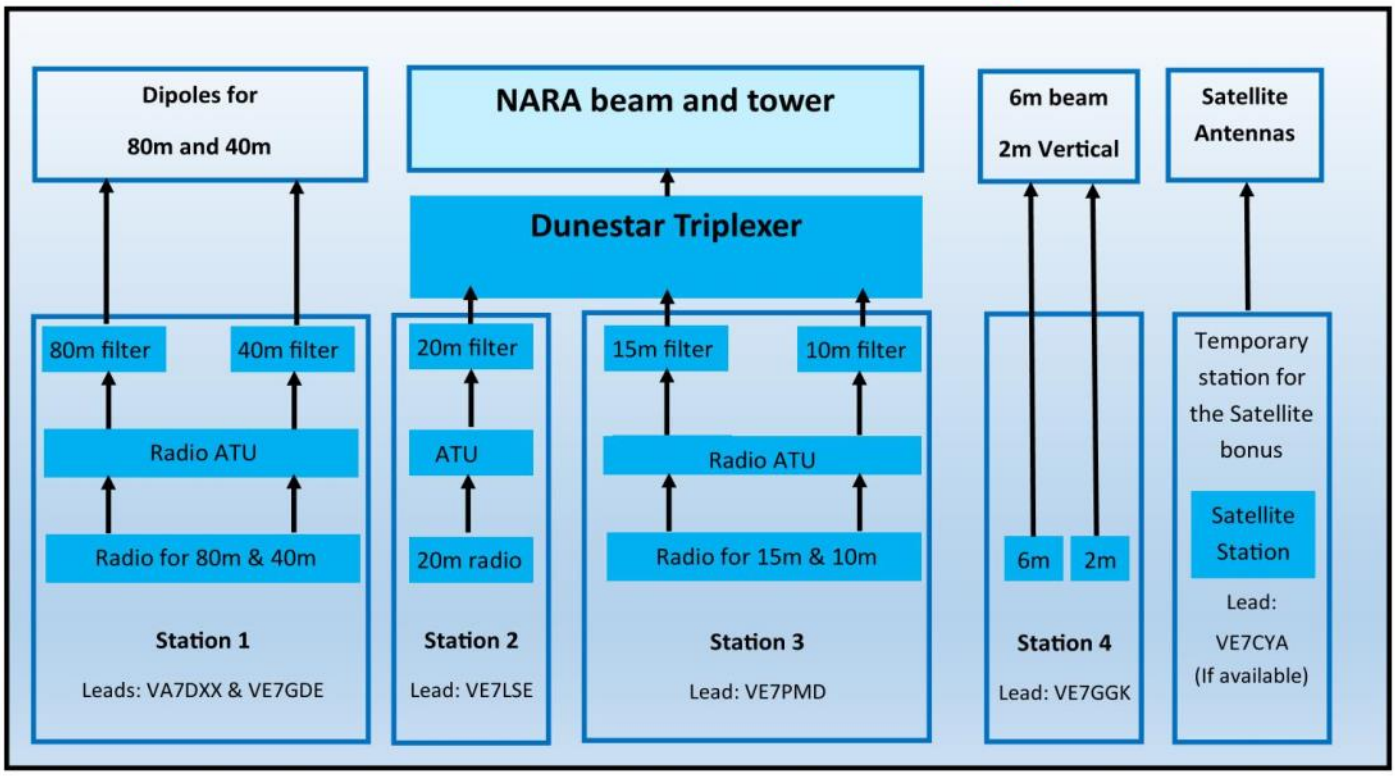
Date: Wednesday, June 11, at 7 pm. This is an in-person meeting.
Venue: 808 Wing building at 719 Nanaimo Lakes Road, Nanaimo.
Program: General meeting, coffee break, presentation 'VE7NA Remote Operation."
NARA Membership Cards: To those in attendance who have not already received one.
Note: This will be the last NARA general meeting until September 11.

NARA's NVIS Propagation Tests

These tests took place on Saturday, May 31. We will have a full report next month.

Devan VE7LSE operating during the NVIS tests. Other operators were VE7PMD, VE7GDE, VA7DXX, VE7IAD and VE7BGP

NARA's Field Day



General Information at a glance - Saturday, June 28, and Sunday, June 29

Location Sunnus Farm, Cedar	**Set up on Saturday** From 9 am (Pacific)	**Field Day Start Time** 11 am (Pacific)	**NARA Callsign** VE7NA	**Field Day Software** N3FJP
Laptops Panasonic Toughbook's	**Modes of operation** Decided by operator	**4 Wheel Drive** Please use if available	**Overnight camping** fieldday@ve7na.ca	**Toilets** On site

Saturday Pot Luck Dinner at 5 pm (Pacific)

This will be coordinated by NARA

Please expect an email for co-ordination

Sunday Breakfast at 9:30 am (Pacific)

You need to register in advance so that the numbers are known via **fieldday@ve7na.ca**

$5 please pay on the day

10 km/h

Farm Speed Limit

There is a Farm maximum speed limit of 10 Km/hour. There are people, animals, and active farm equipment on site.

Please drive slowly and safely

Please bring with you

Camping chairs, plates and cutlery

Your own headset and Morse key

Please read The safety document	**Communications** VA7DXH Repeaters	**VA7DXH Frequencies** 145.410 or 224.040 MHz	**APRS Beacon** Tent on APRS Map	**Contact or any questions** fieldday@ve7na.ca

NARA Upcoming Summer Events

NARA summer events include the following:

MIVA Bike Race: June 15
Please volunteer via bikerace@ve7na.ca
ARRL Field Day: June 28-29, Watch for email details
Contact via fieldday@ve7na.ca
Canada Day: July 1, watch for details via email with initial contact via canadaday@ve7na.ca
Bathtub Race: July 27
Please volunteer via bathtub@ve7na.ca

VE7NA Club Station Update

Thanks to Mason VE7PMD for this VE7NA Update:

- The current VE7NA team consists of Mason VE7PMD, Brandon VE7TZB, and Greg VE7GGH
- The team will give a update on remote operation at the June NARA general meeting
- Richard VE7AA is checking the documentation as a remote Beta tester
- The CTR2 dial for tuning and volume in use with the Flex radio is working
- The team is concentrating on SSB operation first, CW will follow
- The team thanks the NARA executive and members for their patience on this project

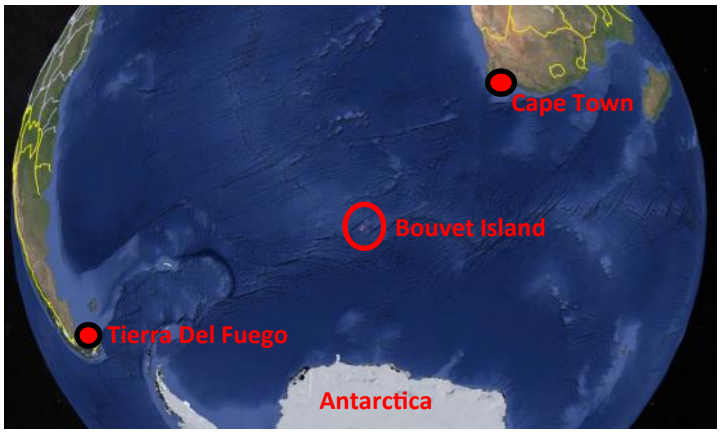
New ISED Minister

Following the re-election of the Liberal government, Prime Minister Mark Carney has appointed a new minister for ISED (Ministry of Innovation, Science and Economic Development), which oversees the Amateur Radio Service in Canada. The new ISED minister is Melanie Joly. She replaces Anita Anand.

Melanie Joly is the new minister of ISED

How is DX – David VA7DXX

Everyone wants to work Bouvet Island, an inhospitable and freezing cold island in the southern Atlantic with significant wind chills and covered in snow and ice. Not only is Bouvet inhospitable but it is extremely remote, located just north of the Antarctic Circle. Bouvet has been described as the 'most remote uninhabited place on Earth.'



Uninhabited Bouvet Island, best visited in it's summer month of January, located in the middle of nowhere.

The last team to operate from Bouvet, in February 2023, using the callsign 3Y0J, did make about 19,000 contacts – close to 9,000 callsigns - but it is fair to say that this DXpedition was not regarded as being entirely successful. At least it did not meet its own expectations. Bouvet DXpeditions can be very challenging to contact to start with, and it was only a few weeks before the 2023 DXpedition that I learned the team would be operating from the Cape Fir location on Bouvet. Cape Fir is on the southeast side of the island where a 780-metre high mountain close by screens signals in the direction of North America. Thus the location did not inspire confidence with many DXers in North America. In addition to that seemingly poor location, the 3Y0J team had decided to land on the island by boat. That in itself ended up causing some major issues; the main one being that no heavy equipment could be landed because of rough seas. It was just too dangerous to even try.

Ultimately, the 2023 3Y0J DXpedition to Bouvet could not get their big generators and amplifiers to their camp. All they could manage to bring ashore was one tent, which was crowded, a wood burning stove, 100 watts of amplification, and wire antennas. The team

of seven that braved the terrible conditions remained for a week. For me, 30m was the only band that worked. I made two contacts with 3Y0J for a new country, one on CW and an FT8 contact for backup. My CW contact with 3Y0J was one of the most difficult I have ever made, with the CW signal from Bouvet being consistently below my noise level. I struggled but refused to give up because this was a new DXCC entity for me.

The team of seven who braved Bouvet Island in 2023. The amateur on the left is Canadian amateur Cezar VE3LYC

Contrast that 3Y0J DXpedition of 2023 with the trip to Bouvet Island now being planned for February 2026 by the 3Y0K team, which recently gathered in Oslo, Norway, for a planning meeting. That team will consist of 20-plus operators who intend to stay three weeks. They will use a large vessel, leaving from Cape Town, South Africa, and are planning to land their equipment on the island by helicopter. The group plans to establish two locations; one at Cape Fir and another further west, probably near Larsoya, which has a much better shot at North America. Of course, the planned helicopter use is also somewhat fraught, with rough seas, bitter cold, snow, and high winds; such is the challenge of Bouvet Island. The 3Y0K team has a budget of $1.6 million (US) and the group is presently fundraising. Bouvet is by no means an easy location in so many ways. As we approach February, more information will become available.

Last month, I noted that Yaris LY2GM was operating from Marion Island as ZS8W, an extremely rare DX location in the southern Indian Ocean midway between Africa and Antarctica. I really would have liked a CW contact with Marion Island, but it was not to be. I only ever heard Yaris on 40m CW once, and he was very weak. I did however manage to work ZS8, using FT8, on four new bands: 80, 40, 30 and 20m. For my 80m contact I had to wait more than an hour to make it through. Two other VE7s also made a contact during that period. Some 76% of ZS8W's contacts were with Asia and Europe, with North America gaining only 19% of contacts. This certainly reflects overall propagation conditions. However, I was pleased to make Marion Island on four new bands, and especially with a contact on 80m. With Marion Island almost at our antipode, it is certainly the longest 80m contact I have made from Ladysmith.

Yaris operated for just under a month from Marion Island as ZS8W.

I have previously mentioned in the NARA Newsletter the 4U1ITU station at the headquarters of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), based in Geneva. I have an affinity for that station because many years ago I operated from there. On May 16 the IARC (International Amateur Radio Club), which runs 4U1ITU, began celebrating the founding of the ITU in 1865, 160 years ago. To mark the occasion, the ITU station will use the special callsign 4U0ITU, which will be active until the end of this year.

This month we can expect DXpeditions from the following DXCC entities: Faroe Islands (OY), Madagascar (5R8AD), St Martin (FS), Jersey (MJ, two separate teams), Spain (EA5), Bermuda (VP9), French Polynesia (FO, two separate teams), Vanuatu (YJ0RS), Ogasawara (JD1BQP), Cyprus SBA (ZC4TH), Guatemala (TG), Palau (T88PB), Morocco (CN8DX), St Pierre & Miquelon (FP), Greenland (OX) and Dodecanese (SV5). Also note that during June the special event callsign VC9DT will celebrate the 65th anniversary of New Brunswick's Dobson Trail, which goes between Riverview, NB, and Fundy National Park. Also look out for PA2025NATO and PH25NATO operating in June as special event stations associated with the NATO summit at the end of June in the Netherlands.

For aficionados of the 6m band, a reminder that we are now in sporadic E season. The season typically starts mid-May, peaking in early June until July.

630-Meter Band Worked All States Awards Issued

Eric Tichansky, NO3M, of Saegertown, Penn., has been issued the first ARRL Worked All States award for the 630-meter band. He picked up the award at ARRL headquarters in Newington, Conn., on April 21. It was the culmination of years of study, work, and experimentation.

WARA Swap Meet in Victoria

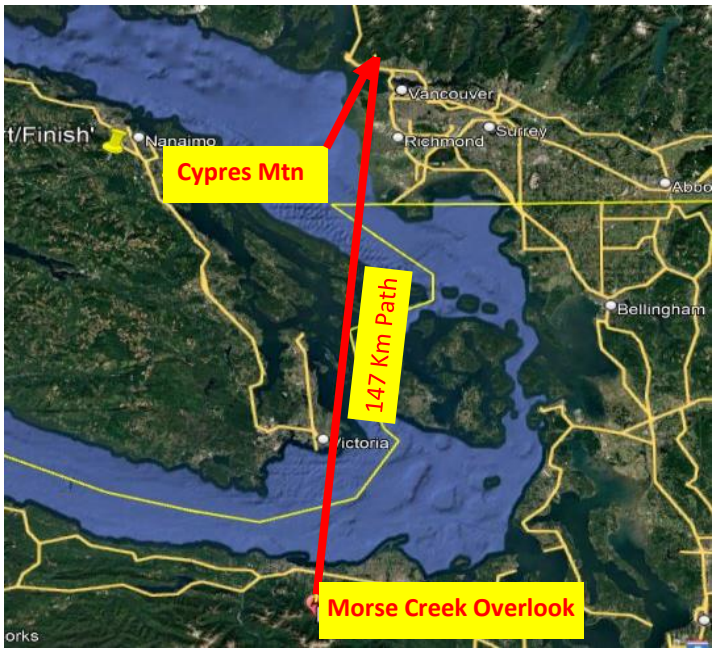
An early announcement for the tri-annual Victoria swap meet. It takes place this year on Saturday, Sept. 13, with doors opening at 9 am. It will be held at the Gordon United Church, 935 Goldstream Ave., Langford, which has easy access from the Island Highway. General admission will be $5. Vendors seeking tables should contact Jim VE7MHJ at WARA_Swap_2025@proton.me for information.

More Narrow Band Microwave Activity

More 10 GHz and 24 GHz narrow band activity to report, which just missed the May NARA Newsletter.

On April 27, the main microwave activity involved Dino VE7NX and Scott VA7SC. They took their equipment to Cyprus Mountain (CN89JI), north of Vancouver. That morning Dino and Scott worked Ray W7GLF and Frank AG6QV, who were located at the Morse Creek Overlook, 12 kilometers south-southeast of Port Angeles, WA., at 788 metres above sea level.

Ray and Frank were initially unsure of the direction of Vancouver but then heard the 150mW 10 GHz VE7SAR/B beacon in Surrey, so were quickly able to establish the correct direction. Contacts on 10 GHz and 24 GHz followed over the 147 kilometre path.



The 10 GHz and 24 GHz path worked in late April

Dino VE7NX and Scott VA7SC in the background, operating on both 10 GHz and 24 GHz from Cyprus Mountain.

Contesting 101

At the NARA in-person general meeting in May, David VA7DXX and Jack VE7GDE gave a PowerPoint presentation called 'Contesting 101.'

Topics included David and Jack's contesting history, station layout, the difference between 'running' and 'search-and-pounce' techniques, interpreting contest rules, propagation and beam headings, logging programs, the use of Q-codes, the phonetic alphabet, speed of delivery for speech and CW, and how to get into contesting as a beginner. The presentation concluded with a brief introduction to SO2R (Single Operator, 2 stations) operating.

At the end of the session David announced that together with Jack, and operating as VE7NA, they had won their section in the 2024 Canada Winter Contest. David had just received the plaque from RAC which will be hung in the VE7NA radio room.

David VA7DXX and Jack VE7GDE, entered the RAC Winter Contest in December 2024 from VA7DXX's station, signing VE7NA. Jack made the SSB contacts with David on CW. They won their section in the contest. The plaque from RAC had just arrived in time for the NARA May general meeting.

Dayton Hamvention

The Dayton Hamvention had an attendance of 36,814 attendees this year. This was an increase of 2.6% over the 2024 event. As explained in last month's NARA Newsletter, Radio Amateurs of Canada did not send an official delegation to Dayton this year. The Dayton Hamvention is the largest gathering of radio amateurs in North America each year.

The Satellite Downlink: Reworking My Ultra-Portable Satellite Rig and First 2025 Portable Operation Bruce VE7PTN

In April's article, I discussed an ultra-portable satellite rig for a trip to Europe that I will be making this month. To travel as lightly as possible, I will not take my dual ICOM IC-705 setup and instead I've decided to take just a single VHF/UHF handheld to work FM satellites. My plan was to take an ICOM ID-52 to use with an Arrow II antenna. Although this setup was quite compact and portable during testing, I found the half-duplex nature of the radio was limiting. Being half duplex meant that I could not hear myself on the satellite downlink while transmitting. I missed a few QSOs during testing because of this. In the April article I said that I would just accept this downside in favour of the features of compactness and built-in

QSO recording. Since then, I have been thinking more about this downside and decided to do some more testing with a dual handheld setup.

In addition to my new ICOM ID-52, I also have a Kenwood TH-D74. One limitation of the D74 is that its QSO recorder can only record one band at a time. But if I use it as a second radio in a two-radio setup, this would not be an issue since both radios would be configured in single-band mode. I had the headset connected to the ID-52 for downlink monitoring and a speaker-mic on the D74 for my transmit audio. With this setup figured out I did some testing, and the results were great. Being able to hear the downlink when transmitting is really a great asset. Not only does it allow me to know if I am being heard by other operators, but it also gives me live audio feedback that I can use to maximize my uplink success by making minor antenna orientation adjustments. And the built-in QSO recorders on each radio provided a nice record for review (essential for satellite work when live logging is challenging).

Bruce VE7PTN with dual handheld radio satellite rig consisting of Kenwood TH-D74 and ICOM ID-52.

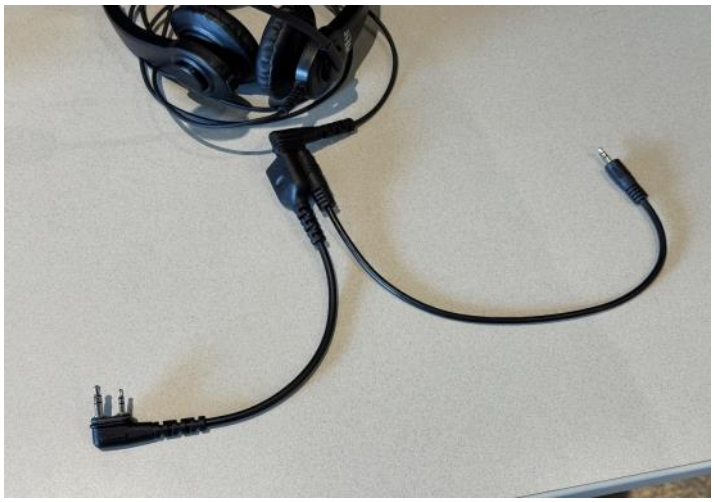
This two-radio setup is still compact enough for travel; it easily fits in the small tripod bag I am planning to use for storage. But as I have mentioned before I have found the D74 to be a bit fragile, so I am nervous about travelling with it. I do have another handheld radio, the ICOM IC-V86. This radio is a basic single band VHF with no QSO recorder; however, it has a 7-watt transmitter. Those extra couple of watts could be helpful on the busy FM satellite passes I expect to encounter in Europe. All the reliable FM satellites are VHF uplink and UHF downlink. So, using the V86 for the transmit radio, and the ID-52 for the downlink and recorder, could be a good configuration for most of the FM satellites. This would mean that I would have no recording of my uplink audio, but since that audio is received on the downlink and recorded, it is optional. With this in mind, I tested the all-ICOM configuration of IC-V86 uplink and ID-52 downlink with great results. The V86 really has a great transmitter; I often get great signal reports when checking in on a local net. It worked great on satellites, and I had no trouble getting into the birds, until low elevations with competing stations.

With my mind now changed and planning to travel with a two-radio setup, I set about fine-tuning the rig to make it as compact as possible. My typical coax for portable ops is a pair of six-foot RG8X with BNC connections from Radioworld. This is a bit of overkill for the handhelds. So I decided to experiment and ordered some shorter, more flexible RG58/U coax cables from Amazon. I was able to order three-foot and four-foot cables, a good fit with the offset driven element connections of the Arrow II. The cable quality seemed good on visual inspection. Our first camping trip of 2025 would provide a good field test of my ultra-portable setup.

All-ICOM dual handheld radio satellite rig as tested during camping trip to Fillongley Park, consisting of IC-V86 for VHF uplink and ID-52 for UHF downlink and QSO recording. The storage bag for the rig is also visible; both radios, cables, and the collapsed antenna easily fit inside.

The Wednesday before the May long weekend, we packed up the travel trailer and headed to Fillongley Provincial Park on Denman Island for a five-day visit. Camping trips are a great opportunity for me to conduct Parks-On-The-Air (POTA) activations. After a June 2024 visit to the same park, I was top activator for POTA QSOs and tied with another operator for the number of activations. This trip would allow me to add to my activation count as well as test the ultra-portable setup. During this visit I added 147 POTA QSOs (42 satellite and 105 FT8 HF) and five activations, securing my top activator standing. On the two drier days I worked a couple of RS-44 linear satellite passes using my computer-controlled ICOM IC-9700, with antenna pointing assistance from my wife, Andrea. I worked six FM satellite passes using the two-handheld rig, with great success. The Amazon -sourced coax cables worked fine. Having only the downlink recording was not a problem at all when it came to post-pass logging. Operating on the beach with a brisk south east wind, I did notice that the wind noise on the IC-V86 speaker-mic was problematic. My downlink audio was quite distorted unless I kept the mic very well protected from the wind. (Being able to hear the quality of my uplink on the downlink was another benefit to the two-radio setup.) With more help from Amazon, I acquired a short 2.5mm Tip-Ring-Sleeve (TRS) audio cable that will allow me to split the microphone connection from my ID-52 headset over to the IC-V86 microphone input. That headset has a wind filter covering the microphone so should perform better. I will probably still take the IC-V86 speaker mic travelling with me as backup.

Bruce VE7PTN operating the RS-44 linear satellite from Fillongley Park with assistance from his wife, Andrea.



The microphone and speaker splitter for the IC-V86 and ID-52 setup. The microphone 2.5 mm TRS connection is on the left. On the right is an ICOM OPC-2144 Plug Adapter Cable where only the speaker connection is used. This adapter is necessary because the recessed speaker jack on the ID-52 can only be accessed using a very narrow plug that the OPC-2144 provides. Some modification of the jack end of the 2.5 mm TRS cable was required; by removing a portion of the plastic jacket the 2.5 mm jack could fit beside the OPC-2144 Plug Adapter Cable.

In the slightly embarrassing department, I was re-organizing some of my gear storage at home when I came across a mailing tube that I assumed was empty. It was a bit heavier than expected so gave it a shake and heard rattling. When I opened it up, I found a brand-new Arrow II split boom without a built-in diplexer. This was exactly what I needed for my ultra-portable rig. I had been planning to remove the diplexer from my other Arrow II split boom for the Europe trip. But with this forgotten-then-found boom, I was ready to go! (I guess it means I have enough radio gear now that I am forgetting what I have already on hand?... Nah!) My CEPT operating permit has arrived from RAC, so I am all set to operate abroad.

That's all for this month. I am planning to provide a short update for the July newsletter while I am traveling this month in Europe. Wish me luck. 73.

NARA's Website:

https://ve7na.ca

The 2025 MIVA Bike Race

Some 20 NARA members have signed up for the 2025 MIVA bike race which takes place on Sunday June 15. NARA is supporting this race because it provides an opportunity for members to practice and improve their communications skills. For those members who are attending the race, a briefing document has been sent out detailing all of the aspects of the race.

The main focus of the NARA briefing document is safety. Both the riders and NARA members will be operating in the back country, north west of Mount Benson, which only has sparse cellular coverage, meaning that safety, is a very real concern.

From a radio perspective, NARA will use the VA7ITS UHF repeater to establish a directed voice net for race coordination and safety. VA7ITS will be disconnected from the Island Trunk System for the duration of the race with suitable announcements every 30 minutes. As backup, most of the two-person teams will have APRS beacons so that the net control station is aware of the location of the teams. In addition, two backup frequencies will be used, 144.580 MHz simplex and an optional 80m LSB frequency of 3.744 MHz. The net control station will check-in with the NARA teams every 30 minutes for a safety check.

The prime function of the NARA teams is to make the race organizer aware of any known safety issues involving either the bike riders or the NARA teams. For example, a rider who has been injured or appears unwell, or a bear near the course, as happened in 2024. In addition, both riders and NARA teams should be aware of other potential hazards such as the fire risks in the back country.

The race organizer has arranged for two ambulances to be on the course, one will be at net control awaiting possible dispatch and the other will be roaming the course. NARA will provide APRS trackers for both ambulances and if necessary NARA will supply radio operators. The ambulances will use the voice tactical callsigns of 'MEDICS1' and 'MEDICS2.' In fact, all the nine NARA race checkpoints will use tactical callsigns in addition to the VA/VE ISED issued callsigns.

While NARA is not responsible for the overall safety of the race, members will assist with radio communications for known safety issues. NARA is not responsible for sweeping the course, but again will assist with radio communication if required.

The map shows the nine checkpoints along the race course. There are three classes of riders taking part in the MIVA race.

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

The deadline for the July 2025 issue of the NARA Newsletter is noon on Friday, June 27, with an intended publication date of June 30.

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

news@ve7na.ca

NARA Coffee Klatches

Day	Frequency	Time	Location
Tuesday	Weekly	10:30 am	**South end Smitty's:** #50 10 the Street
Thursday	3rd Thursday of the month	7:00 pm	**Tim Hortons**: 2320 Northfield Road
Saturday	Weekly	9:00 am	**North end Smitty's:** 2980 North Island Hwy, the Rock City Centre