Communicate Anywhere… Anytime!

There are so many facets to this hobby—there is something in Amateur Radio for all ages and skill levels!

Recognizing the valuable role played by Amateur Radio organizations, **SARC** is proudly affiliated with these Amateur Radio groups and programs.

Why Amateur Radio?

Besides being an enjoyable and practical past-time that generates contacts worldwide, Amateur Radio is also a reliable communications option. A vivid example of the value of Amateur Radio in disaster communications was the 1998 ice storms that paralyzed Eastern Canada and the United States. For days, throughout rural areas, hundreds of Amateur Radio operators provided the only communication link with the outside world. They augmented regular emergency services' communications in cities where telephone service had been severed. Providing this type of assistance in times of emergency has generated growing public interest in the hobby.

Amateur Radio Field Day is held annually on the last full weekend in June. More than 35,000 hams from across North America and beyond compete for points earned by setting up a station and operating for 24 hours without commercial infrastructure. The contest component is to work as many stations as possible on any and all amateur bands and to learn to operate in abnormal situations in less than optimal conditions. Field Day is open to all amateurs in the areas covered by the ARRL/RAC Field Organizations and countries within the International Amateur Radio Union - Region 2.

Amateur Radio—More than a hobby

Whether you would like to chat with your friends on the way to work or school, be safer and in communications for outdoors activities, check into a net to discuss topics of a mutual interest, or volunteer for emergency services in time of need, amateur radio is first and foremost about communication. With hams that means two way communi-cation by radio. Radios can be hand-held transceivers simi-lar to a walkie-talkie, a mobile unit for use in a car or other vehicle, or a base station with an outdoor antenna used for local or distance communication. Regardless of the type of equipment, radio amateurs have a wide range of activities they can pursue. Some of these are:

- Talking with friends within the local community using a mobile radio or hand-held transceiver. Great for hikers, campers and boaters. You can even speak with someone on their telephone via radio.
- Safer Communities. Assisting with emergency and disas-ter communication through organizations such as the Surrey Emergency Program Amateur Radio Society (SEPARS), the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES), and the Provincial Emergency Radio Communications Service (PERCS) prepare amateurs with the training needed to assist in emergency situations.
- Technical experimenting. Hams come from all walks of life ranging from technicians to engineers, teachers to scientists, and students to retirees. There are many pro-jects ranging from TV to computing and the Internet that involve amateur radio.
- Contesting. Contesting is often called the "sport" of ham radio. Almost every weekend there is some form of ama-teur radio contest. Hams get on the air and compete to see who can make the most contacts in a limited period of time.
- Use digital communication. Connect a computer to your radio, install free software, and you can be communi-cating digitally over the air, by voice or e-mail without an Internet Service Provider.
- Using some of the latest technologies, hams can supple-ment a modest station with an Internet connection. Using services such as IRLP on a local repeater or via Echolink on the Internet, a ham in Surrey can talk to one in Toronto, Australia or even Antarctica using a simple hand-held transceiver.

Parkland Amateur Radio Club

- Talk to an astronaut. Yes, it is really possible. The International Space Station has ham radio equipment and licensed ham astronauts take the time to make contacts with amateurs on Earth. Hams also have their own orbiting satellites where you can bounce a signal to communicate with other hams on Earth at very distant locations.

Getting Licensed in Canada

Licensing of Amateur Radio in Canada is federally regulated by Industry Canada. It is illegal to operate on the amateur bands without an Amateur Radio Operator Certificate. There are three levels of qualification as follows:

Basic Qualification: This certificate requires a minimum 70% score on a multiple choice test of 100 questions. The test covers topics such as radio theory, government radio regulations, and operating practices. Receiving the certificate gives operating privileges on bands above 30 MHz, which include the popular 2 meter and 70 cm bands.

Basic With Honours Qualification: This level requires an 80% or better score on the Basic exam of 100 multiple-choice questions. Achieving a higher exam score allows access to all amateur radio bands. Morse code is no longer a requirement.

Advanced Qualification: Adding this level to your Basic or Basic With Honours Qualification requires passing a test of 50 questions on advanced radio theory. The Advanced Qualifications permits the holder to operate high-power transmitters, build their own radio equipment, and sponsor a repeater or club station.