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# Newsletter of The London Amateur Radio Club

September 2003

## 2004 Executive

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This Newsletter was prepared by Anne Skipp, VA3FRO

## President's Message

Howdy! My name is Mark Bramwell (VE3PZR) and I have the honor of being the President of the London Amateur Radio Club for the 2003/2004 year. I have been a ham for over 15 years and enjoy many facets of the hobby.

Since the last general meeting in June, the club has participated in 'field day', we have put a new repeater on the air (VA3MGI - 145.390 PL=114.8) and have started a new round-table net on Tuesday's @ 8pm called the ELMER net to discuss the 'How to' of the hobby. It is now that time of year when summer starts to wind down, the vacations are over, kids are getting back to school and LARC starts back in full force with a new year of events.

In keeping with the momentum, we will kick off the new season in September with a special guest speaker for our general meeting as well as the annual London Amateur Radio Flea Market at the Fair Grounds.

In keeping with our mission to 'Promote radio in London and surrounding areas', I would like to extend an open invitation to all (members, non-members, hams, non-hams) to come out to our meetings; discuss the world of radio, electronics & computers and generally have good time with friendly people who share similar interests.

Meeting location, time and topics can be found in this bulletin as well as our website

See you there!  
Mark Bramwell, VE3PZR

## Upcoming Events

**LARC Meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at**  
St. Judes Church,  
1537 Adelaide St. N.  
( SW corner of Adelaide and Fanshawe Park Rd. E.)  
7:30 pm

**September 11<sup>th</sup>** Paul Cassel VE3SY, will be discussing using digital modes with your computer and radio. PSK31, PACTOR, etc.

**September 21<sup>st</sup>** LARC Fleamarket, see attached flyer.

**October 9<sup>th</sup>** Jack Summers VA3XR, from Radioworld will be paying us a visit.

**Win a \$100.00 Gift Certificate from**  
**Radioworld**  
**When you renew or become a new member with LARC**  
**Details inside**

# Win a \$100.00 Gift Certificate from Radioworld

When you renew or become a new member with LARC for the 2004 term, you will automatically become eligible to win a \$100.00 gift certificate from Radioworld. All memberships paid from July 1<sup>st</sup> to Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>, 2003 will be entered into the draw.

## London Amateur Radio Club 2004 Membership Form

LARC Single membership: \$25.00  
LARC Family membership: \$30.00  
Renewal / New Member (circle one)

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Call Sign:</b>	
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	
<b>City or Town:</b>	
<b>Postal Code:</b>	
<b>Phone #:</b>	
<b>E-mail:</b>	

*This information is for the maintenance of membership records and to communicate with its members.  
All LARC membership information is held in strict confidence.*

**All boxes must be filled out, all future Newsletters will be sent via e-mail.**

Make cheque payable to LARC Inc.

Please mail to: LARC

C/O Membership Director  
P.O. BOX 82 STATION 'B'  
LONDON ON N6A4V3

What is your LARC membership money used for?

VA3LON – 2 meter repeater

VA3MGI – 2 meter repeater

VE3LON – 220 repeater

VE3RCL – LARC Club station, HF, 2 meters, 440, 3 element Hygain beam,  
\$5,000,000 club liability insurance

Field Day

Meeting Hall

Annual LARC Fleamarket

Repeater site rental fee

Club P.O. Box

Website [www.larc.on.ca](http://www.larc.on.ca)

Repeater phone patch

# A.R.E.S.

Amateur Radio operators have always pulled together in times of need, to volunteer their time, equipment and experience in order to help others in the community. We are very lucky to have such vast radio spectrum resources available to us, and we are able to provide multi-mode communications during a disaster situation because of these resources. Providing public service is a small price to pay in exchange for the enjoyment our exciting hobby, especially as demands on the radio spectrum continually increase. Our role as the emergency communicator is also something to be very proud of.

ARES volunteers have worked hard over the years to make ARES a respected public service group. In the London area, and many other parts of Canada, ARES has been accepted by first responders and municipalities as a valued resource. This was only possible due to the continued support by volunteers such as yourself, and your participation in programs such as “Goblin Patrol” and “CANWARN”, as well as exercises like Field Day and the SET (Simulated Emergency Test).

It is my opinion that if we are to be prepared for any large scale disaster, that ARES and other communications volunteers need to work closer with volunteers from other municipalities. If we pool our resources and training, we would be able to be more effective in an emergency.

I also believe that the secret to having reliable volunteer resources is to have a foolproof and effective callout plan. I have recently arranged a numeric paging group with the help of Spectrum Communications. This paging group will be available to Emergency Coordinators for use during emergencies and tests. The paging group will allow all volunteers with pagers to be notified at once by calling one telephone number, and the pagers will display the repeater frequency on their numeric display.

These refurbished pagers are not a requirement of ARES, but may be purchased by amateurs wishing to do so for \$19.95 plus taxes. Pagers will come with a 30-day warranty. Owning one of these pagers will greatly improve the chances a volunteer will be alerted in an emergency, and therefore improve the number of volunteers who may be available to respond in times of crisis.

Please consider obtaining a pager, even if you are not able to participate as an active ARES member. If you are not able to participate as an active member, but are willing to be called in an emergency via pager, you can be put on the ARES backup list. You may find that you are available to assist in some capacity during a disaster, and by having the pager, you will be informed of resource nets taking place. Please note that batteries are not included, and are the responsibility of the individual. Also, these pagers will not be assigned individual numbers, as they will be dedicated for emergency purposes only.

It is my hope that the pagers will also be set off 15 minutes prior to the weekly ARES net on VE3OME (145.450Mhz ) to remind volunteers, and test our callout plan. This semi-formal net is held every Wednesday evening at 7:30pm, and is open for anyone wishing to participate.

If you are interested in participating as an ARES volunteer, or if you are interested in purchasing a pager so that you can be alerted during an ARES call-out, please feel free to contact myself. I may be contacted via email at [ve3cgn@rac.ca](mailto:ve3cgn@rac.ca) or paged at (519) 646-4300.

73 de VE3CGN

Scott D. Carter, VE3CGN  
Emergency Coordinator (London)  
ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Service)

## Plasma TV --- Mother Of All RFI Producers

Have you noticed the big sales push by Best Buy (and others) of those plasma TV screens? You know, the ones whose prices have 4 digits in them. There are even payment plans where the price is spread over months or years to help you afford them. Many of these are going to be sold this holiday season.

Unfortunately, no one is mentioning the horrendous RFI that these things put out on HF.

I recently installed a CCTV system to keep an eye on my toys. The security company, ADT, suggested a Panasonic 42" Plasma TV/CCTV monitor since the light output was high enough that the pix could be viewed in broad daylight.

The morning after the installation of the plasma screen, I noticed a huge digital signal about 7.001 MHz and a few other places on the same band. Next, I checked 20 meters, then 15 meters. Same signal but a little weaker as I went up in frequency. Then, I looked at 80 meters - a gigantic noise at 3.505 MHz and other frequencies in the band. 160 meters was the same. What was this!

I did a little direction finding and found that it was coming from my house! Sure enough when I switched off the recently installed plasma display, the noise disappeared and I could hear the DX again.

The security company, ADT talked with Panasonic, who informed them that there was nothing that could be done. I owned it. I hooked up my HP Network Analyzer to see just how bad the problem was across the HF spectrum. It was unbelievably strong!

### How strong was it?

Below, is a graph that shows the noise output of the plasma TV on the HP Network Analyzer. Those numbers on the right side of the graph represent db above the ambient noise level here inside the house. Yes, that would be 50 db at the top. That's about 8 S-units!

Notice how the noise is the worst on the low bands, but the rest of the bands are impacted as well. Your new Super Duper Signal Sucker receiver will definitely find this baby on any of the HF bands!

### So What?

So, you are now saying, "So what - there's a big difference between 10 feet away and the distance between me and my closest neighbor. I might not hear that thing at all." You are SO wrong!

I have a 40m antenna that is located a quarter mile from my house and the signal levels from the Panasonic Plasma screen are still S-3 to S-5. Plus, this is off the back of the unit where the signals are attenuated by the metal casing. The signals off the front are stronger.

I have a 4 square for 40m located about 150 feet from the side of the screen and my `MP says it's S9+10db. So, unless the DX is stronger than that, you're likely to have a problem hearing them.

### Let's look at some numbers

Just one Panasonic unit produces an S-3 raspy signal on lots of frequencies at 1/4 mile away from my antenna. How many houses are within a 1/4 mile radius from your house? 500? 1000? OK, now what percentage of those houses will have one of those super efficient raspy RFI generators by say, 2004? Let me guess at 2 percent. That means that you will have 10 to 20 of these things within the 1/4 mile radius of your station. Plus the prices are coming down which will result in a lot more of them. Got the picture?

### The FCC will protect us, right?

This device, which is allowed to pollute the entire HF spectrum, is allegedly consistent with Part 15 rules; they say so right in the literature. It says that this device can't cause any licensed station any interference and it has to accept all the interference from licensed devices. Now all you have to do is get the rule enforced against all those people that surround you. Good Luck.

Some of the commercial airplane manufacturers are getting ready to use these things on commercial flights. The communication systems of the Friendly Skies are more concerned with VHF/UHF than the HF spectrum, so it's lucky for them that the spurious output of the screens is reduced as we go up in frequency. Even so, in order to comply with the regulations, some of the screen manufacturers have had to resort to a mesh over the front of the screen to form a sort of Faraday Shield that reduces the signals. Of course, this reduces the picture quality, too. So, don't expect your neighbors to start pulling the mesh over their screen to help you listen for the latest weak signal.

Apparently, the manufacturers don't think that those of us on the ground are worth the investment in shielding and the FCC backs them up with the limp Part 15 rules. Or maybe the Part 15 spawned the unthinking use of high voltage switching for a bright picture and RFI be damned attitude.

### What can we do?

You could try one of the noise reduction boxes like the one made by MFJ or JPS but my experience has been that they require a lot of fiddling and retuning every time that you change frequency.

In any case, get ready for the RFI storm. It's forming right now at your local Best Buy and lots of greedy electronics manufacturers who don't mind polluting the spectrum while grabbing your money.

Is it true that if a device puts out a spurious signal on a certain frequency that it is susceptible to incoming signals of the same frequency? That's just a question. I'm not advocating anything.

Paul  
NO8D