

# marc gram

Volume 59, Number 07 - April 2014



## *Next meeting - April 30th, 2014*

Ragchew and Fleamarket : 19h30, Club meeting : 20h00

St-Ignatius of Loyola Parish Church  
4455 West Broadway, N.D.G. - Montreal

Presentation by John Grow, VE2EQL on  
Remote Station Operation Technology.

## MarcOgram

The MarcOgram is published nine times per year on the second to last Wednesday of August through May, excepting December, by the Montreal Amateur Radio Club. Advertising and copy deadline is two week prior to publication.

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## The marcOgram team needs you!

We're always on the lookout for interesting articles to include into your monthly newsletter. Do you have a ham radio news item you would like to contribute or just pass along to the marcOgram editors? Just send your document or links to editor@marc.ca

## Club Activities - Monthly Meetings

Club meetings are held on the last Wednesday of the month at St-Ignatius of Loyola Parish Church, 4455 West Broadway, N.D.G. - Montreal. The meetings will be held in the Lounge which is the rearmost door on the South side of the building unless we have reason to hold it in the Parish Hall which is the first door on the South side of the building.

An informal flea-market and ragchew session starts at 19:30 with the formal meeting starting at 20:00.

STM buses 51, 162, and 105 stops at or near the door!

## Meetings of the Board of Directors

Meetings of the Board of Directors are open to any member to attend. Board meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month (Sept. to June) at 7:30 PM at the same venue as the monthly meetings (see above).

Should you wish to attend one of the meetings you are welcome. Just speak to one of the directors beforehand to make certain that the meeting has neither been cancelled, nor the location changed.

## Club Directors

President:

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## MARC Fundraiser WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

In order for MARC to reach some of its goals, we have decided to add advertising in the marcOgram newsletter. The rates are as follows:

Business card	\$ 5.00 per issue
Quarter page	\$ 7.00 per issue
Half page	\$12.00 per issue
Full page	\$20.00 per issue

The "Marcogram" publishes eight issues from September to May. We also publish a summer edition during the month of August. So we actually publish nine issues in all. We have a list distribution of about 200 persons. With a full year commitment, you get 1 issue free. A business card placed for 9 issues would only be \$ 40.00. We are asking for all members with family or friends who have a business to place an ad. You could also advertise a special function.



## A Word from the President

Am I the only one? It seems that the ham-fest, Field Day and all our other yearly activities are getting closer and closer together. My memory must be improving because I remember the 2013 ham-fest as if it was only a year ago... Of course this year was a big change for the MARC and our ham-fest was held in the big hall at the St-Ignatius of Loyal Parish Church. From preliminary estimates, we did fairly well this year. In fact we took in more from the sale of tables this year than last. While it was nice to have the coffee and doughnuts, many missed the sweet brew on tap at the Royal Canadian Legion. Well fear not fellow hams, I have been told that our old spot at the Legion has been procured for next year's ham-fest. Now get out there and support ham-fests in your region. Buy lots of cool new gear and bring it on down to the Legion hall next year. You can unload it at a profit while sipping a cool one.

With the warm weather upon us, I'd like to hear news from the membership as to what new antenna projects are underway, or what maintenance must you do after the long winter months. I myself have two main ones which I never finished last year.

### Annual Fees are:

General Members	\$25.00
Associate Members	\$25.00
White cane members	\$15.00
Family members (per family)	\$30.00

The membership year runs from September 1 to August 31. Membership received on or after June 1 commences immediately and extends through the subsequent membership year - covering a period of up to fifteen months.

One is my second version of my home brew mobile bug catcher style antenna, featuring a dirty big hand wound, high Q loading coil and a 21" capacity hat to help with the bandwidth on the lower bands. That has to be installed on my truck and on the inside, I have to install my new 500W HF mobile amplifier. My second project is a transmitting loop antenna for 80 meters. I started this late last fall and never got it finished before the snow flew. This contraption has been hanging in my back yard from fiberglass poles since last fall. It's more of a square than a loop, 12 foot a side and made from 1" copper water pipe. I have it mounted horizontally and hanging from my back yard. Send in your antenna projects to [editor@marc.ca](mailto:editor@marc.ca) We would love to print them in one of the up and coming MarcOgrams.

I hope you are all planning to support your club for this years Field Day event. The time is fast approaching. Stay tuned to these pages and come to the monthly meetings for news as well as to offer your help. Change is afoot this year and our new Field Day lead organizer Eamon Eagon, VE2EGN has an interesting plan for this year's activities. Next to Radio Talk, this is probably my favorite event of the year.

I'm looking forward to this month's meeting. John Grow, VE2EQL will be updating us on the latest in remote station operation technology. This is a subject of interest to me as I thing it would be nice to be able to offer remote station access to club members who for whatever reasons have HF privileges but are unable to get on the air at home. John is a seasoned speaker and I know you will enjoy hearing what he has to say. I'll be looking for you at this month's general meeting.

73 de Paul, VE2OFH

[Editor note: Look for Radio Talk and Field Day discussion lists information on page 6.]

### Club Call Sign: VE2ARC

Club Website: <http://www.marc.qc.ca>

Club Email: [ve2arc@rac.ca](mailto:ve2arc@rac.ca)

### Repeaters

VE2BG 147.06  
MHz (+)

Owned and operated by Montreal Amateur Radio Club.  
Located on the Pointe Claire water tower.

VE2RED 147.27 MHz (+)  
Owned and operated by Montreal Amateur Radio Club.

## DX and CONTEST NEWS

Hello again and I hope that you had the chance to work some exciting DX during the last month. Speaking of chance, and bad luck, the VK9MT Mellish Reef DXpedition had to abruptly terminate operations due to dangerous weather conditions.

After only five days of operation the VK9MT team had to call it quits and leave the reef due to a tropical cyclone in the Coral Sea. They originally had planned to operate for 12 days but just a few days after arriving the skipper of their boat was monitoring a tropical cyclone developing to the north of the reef. Soon their weather conditions had deteriorated to the point that the last night before going QRT, the winds were so strong that the antennas were falling down and operating tents were leaking rain. It was getting too dangerous for the crew to remain. Remember that this is a reef on an uninhabited remote coral atoll which is just a few meters above sea level during high tide. This same storm now named ITA grew to a category-4 which ravaged the east coast of Australia on the weekend of April 12. Since it takes around three days sailing to get to the Australian coast, the team and their gear were lucky to get out in one piece.

When Mellish Reef went QRV, the pileups were huge, and as usual for a rare one, I waited a few days before trying to work them in order to pass all the “big guns” and let the “lids” do their thing. Well much to my surprise, when the announcement came after three days of operation that they were on storm alert status, I frantically went to work to contact them. The pile-ups of panicked radio amateurs did not help at all, but I managed to work them on three band-modes but it took a lot of patience and every watt of my linear to break through the crowds. I even got up before sunrise to work them on 40 meters. This taught me a valuable lesson: don’t wait too long to work the rare DXpeditions! If you hear them, try to work them right away since you never know what could happen to force them to go QRT and leave you without that precious QSL. This shows that you really have to regularly check out the various DX bulletins and DX websites for any news and updates from the operation. A nice website for DX news especially if the expedition does not have its own website is the DX Bulletin on DX World, <http://dx-world.net/>

By the time you read this we will be in spring-like conditions in terms of propagation. This means that the low-bands will start to be open for less and less time during the night as we approach the summer months but oppositely the higher bands like 20 meters start to stay open for longer periods into the

night. Also the month of May signals the start of changing weather patterns for us in North America which brings severe thunderstorms that raise the atmospheric noise level on HF communications especially on the low bands. Springtime also announces the start of the Sporadic-E (Es) season with some excellent openings on 6 meters. Sporadic-E is highly ionized clouds of particles that sporadically occur in the E layer of the ionosphere. These highly-charged clouds can appear randomly and hang around for hours or even days. They are capable of producing very long-distance propagation on 6 meters. There is also a phenomenon called trans-equatorial propagation (TEP) in which signals propagate along the equator. These propagation modes can occur at any time but usually happen in the early morning and late afternoon to early evening. Sporadic-E is most frequent in the US Midwest and southern states but they also occur in the more northern latitudes bordering USA and Canada. The randomness of these propagation modes almost necessitates that you constantly monitor the conditions and keep you radio open and your antennas pointed south and south-west. You almost never know when an opening will occur. An excellent website to monitor VHF propagation and real-time spots can be found at: <http://www.dxmaps.com/spots/map.php>

This website will give you a very good “heads up” to anything interesting that is brewing on the VHF bands.

In addition, the changing weather conditions in the springtime which produce thunderstorms and bring in warm air especially across a warm front can create temperature inversions. These inversions can lead to another propagation mode called Tropo or tropospheric propagation where VHF signals are refracted inside the inversion layer to produce long-distance communications right up to the 70 cm band. I once worked Oklahoma City on 2 meters SSB simplex with 160 watts and a 17 element Yagi for a distance of 2087 kilometers. This propagation mode occurs very sporadically so you really have to be on the lookout and keep an eye on the weather conditions for signs of tropo openings.

There are still a number of DX operations scheduled for May, but as I had mentioned I will list only the DXpeditions to rare and semi-rare entities. The Mellish Reef expedition really brought out the some of the worst in Ham radio operators so when working a rare one don’t be tempted to be like an alligator (all mouth and no ears) and always remember to follow the DX Code of Conduct, <http://www.dx-code.org/>

(Continued Page 5)

## DX OPERATIONS

JD1BMH – Ogasawara from Chichijima Island (AS-031) will be QRV by JD1BMH from Apr 27 to May 11. He will be on 40 to 10 meters CW, SSB, and RTTY. Check out his website at: <http://sapphire.es.tohoku.ac.jp/jd1bmh/>

JD1BLY – Another operation from Chichijima Island (AS-031) will be QRV by JD1BLY from Apr 27 to May 5. He will be on 40 to 10 meters, CW, SSB, and digital. His website can be found at: <http://www.ji5rpt.com/jd1/>

3B8 – Mauritius will be activated by M0RCX as 3B8/M0RCX from May 2 to May 28. He will be operating on 40 to 6 meters SSB and digital modes. QSL via EB7DX.

5X5LA – Dodecanese will be QRV on Levitha Islet by a Greek team of amateurs from May 3 to May 11. They will operate on 160 to 6 meters, CW, SSB, and RTTY with 100 watts and Yagis for 30 to 6 meters with vertical antennas for the lower bands. QSL via SV2FWV.

HB0DRK – Liechtenstein will be QRV by DL4HTK on 80 to 10 meters CW, SSB, PSK, and RTTY from May 4 to May 18. QSL via DL4DRK.

V650XG – Micronesia will be activated by JA1XGI from May 9 to May 15. He will operate on 40 to 10 meters, CW, SSB, and RTTY. OQRS via Club Log. His website can be found at: <http://island.geocities.jp/v63xg/index.htm>

OY - Faroe Islands will be activated by LA6RHA as OY/LA6RHA and LA8FOA as OY/LA8FOA on May 14 only. They will operate on various HF bands with only SSB. QSL via their home calls.

FY – French Guiana will be QRV by F8FUA as FY/F8FUA and by F5UOW as FY/F5UOW from May 15 to May 25. They will operate on 80 to 10 meters, CW, and SSB. QSL via their home calls.

7QNL – Malawi will be activated by PA3FYM from May 18 to Jun 10. He will operate on 80 to 10 meters, CW, and SSB. He will also operate in the CQ WPX CW contest. QSL via PA1AW. Check out his website at: <http://www.malawihf.org/>

## CONTESTS

March turned out to be excellent for HF propagation culminating with the CQ WPX contest at the end of the month with great conditions. The month of April is also turning out to be very good so far. My team managed to achieve over 2400 contacts in 35 hours of operation in CQ WPX. An R-3 ionospheric disturbance right at the beginning of the contest created some very interesting propagation. Once when we were working Europe on 10 meters, the band went suddenly dead, as if someone “turned off the switch”! The band recovered during the day but then afterwards, 20 meters remained open to Europe that night right until past 2 AM local time. Since 80 meters was quite noisy due to a large storm system along the East Coast, we switched to 40 meters during the night which

resulted in some fantastic runs. The next day, on 10 and 15 meters, we had pile-ups of European stations in the morning and Asian stations in the early evening. I managed to work Cambodia and West Malaysia for an all-time new DXCC. The Cambodian station was spotted and worked at 11 AM local time on 15 meters which is not the normal time for us to work Asia on that band. He was coming in a true S-7 and I had to ask him again for his call to be sure. This shows that this time of year can bring some strange propagation conditions. You should always study the ionospheric conditions before any contest in order to plan your operating strategy. There are many websites where you can check out the HF propagation conditions and forecasts.

Conditions are expected to remain fair to good until the end of May in time for the CQ WPX CW contest. This is basically the last major HF contest until the IARU event in July. So if you just want to improve your DXCC and can handle the fast pace of the contest exchange, you should hunt down the “rare ones” during these major contests. The DX spotting clusters really help in these cases.

As I had mentioned in previous columns, you can participate in a contest practically every weekend but I will list only the major and most popular contests scheduled for the month of May. You can check out the list of all the popular contests on the “Contest Corral” available on the ARRL website or in QST magazine.

Remember to check out the contest rules, dates and times on the ARRL or CQ websites. Rules for the smaller contests can be found on the various sponsors’ websites. Another very useful resource is to subscribe to the ARRL Contest Update which you can receive via e-mail every two weeks and is available to ARRL members. You can also find third-party contest listings for free on the internet.

Ten-Ten Spring CW Contest -- CW 10 meters,

from May 3, 0001z to May 4, 2359z

ARI International DX Contest -- CW, SSB, RTTY,

from May 3, 1200z to May 4, 1159z

Indiana QSO Party -- CW, SSB,

from May 3, 1600z to May 4, 0400z

Radio Club of America QSO Party -- SSB,

from May 3, 1700z to May 4, 0459z

New England QSO Party -- CW, SSB, RTTY,

starts May 3, 2000z - see website.

(Continued Page 6)

Alessandro Volta RTTY DX Contest -- RTTY,

from May 10, 1200z to May 11, 1200z

CQ-M International DX Contest -- CW, SSB,

from May 10, 1200z to May 11, 1200z

His Majesty King of Spain Contest -- CW,

from May 17, 1200z to May 18, 1200z

CQ WW WPX CW Contest -- CW,

from May 24, 0000z to May 25, 2359z

Those are the lists so far so there is still quite a bit of Ham radio activity for the month of May. Please remember to follow the "DX Code of Conduct" when working any DX operation and remember to always listen, listen, and listen FIRST before you transmit. Also remember to read the complete contest rules and make sure that you and your station are all set up and prepared BEFORE the contest starts. Now that we are in springtime which brings thunderstorms, PLEASE shut down your station and disconnect all antennas if you hear thunder. It's just not worth risking your life and/or equipment just to snag that "new one" or for those extra contest points. BE SAFE!! Now go work that DX and have fun on the air and I hope to work you in the next contest!

73, & good DX de George, VE2NGH/VA2EN



## Ham Radio in Space: FUNcube/AO-73 Transponder Will Be Active Each Weekend

The FUNcube/AO-73 Amateur Radio transponder will be active full time (with low-power beacon) on weekends.

FUNcube's controllers will switch to full-time transponder mode during the first suitable pass over the UK on Friday, typically between 1930 and 22:30 UTC. (If this is not possible, the switch will be made on the first suitable pass on Saturday, typically between 0930 and 1200 UTC. Controllers will switch off full-time transponder mode during a suitable pass on Sunday evening, typically between 1930 and 2230 UTC. (If this is not possible, the switch will be made during the first suitable pass on Monday, typically between 0930 and 1200 UTC. This schedule is totally reliant on the availability of

command stations. AO-73's telemetry downlink frequency is 145.935 MHz BPSK. The SSB/CW inverting transponder uplink is 435.150-435.130 MHz LSB, and the downlink is 145.950-145.970 MHz USB. Use a maximum uplink power of 5 W into a 7 dBi gain antenna.

[More information](#) is available on the FUNcube website. Comments and user reports are [welcome](#). -- Thanks to Jim Heck, G3WGM, via AMSAT News Service

## Radio Talk & Field Day discussion lists

Two new discussion lists are now available for people who want to either join in for field day planning, or for Radio Talk announcements or to take part in the Radio Talk organizing.

Those lists are:

Radio Talk Public Announcement List  
[http://www.lists.ca/listinfo/radio\\_talk](http://www.lists.ca/listinfo/radio_talk)

Radio Talk Organizing discussion list  
[http://www.lists.ca/listinfo/rt\\_org](http://www.lists.ca/listinfo/rt_org)

Field Day planning  
<http://www.lists.ca/listinfo/fdplan>

If you have issues and need assistance joining these discussion lists, please contact:

For Radio Talk: Malcolm, [ve2ddz@ve2ddz.ca](mailto:ve2ddz@ve2ddz.ca)

For Field Day: Eamon, [ve2egn@marc.ca](mailto:ve2egn@marc.ca)

Marc-Andre, VE2EVN

## Special Event Station HO100CANAL

This weekend I spotted a special event station in Panama, HO100CANAL. This year Panama is celebrating its 100th anniversary of the Panama Canal.

Organized by amateurs of the Republic of Panama, they will operate the special event station from 10 m to 160 m on SSB, PSK, RTTY and CW. The activity started on April 19th, 2014 and will continue until August 15th, 2014.

On August 15th they celebrate the 100th of the inaugural transit through the Panama Canal.

The QSL Manager for the operation is HP1AVS.

Some of the operators are HP1AVS, HP1COO, HP1CPE, HP7/HP1CSR, HP1DBK, HP3ICC and stations from RADIO CLUB OF PANAMA.

For more information on 100 anniversary of Panama Canal:  
<http://micanaldepanama.com/centennial/>

Marc-Andre, VE2EVN

MarcOgram Co-editor



### Kenwood TM-D710G



The TM-D710GA is a full-featured dual-band mobile that also features APRS functionality and has a built-in GPS.

**\$699.95**

### YouKits 5-Band SSB HT

The TJ2B MKII covers 60, 40, 20, 17 and 15 metres. Full 5W pep output. Simple operation via one tuning knob plus 4 keys for all functions. Now includes lithium battery pack, radio pouch, speaker mic and 12 Volt power cord.



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Si vous desirez parler en francais, demander pour Jami ou envoyer un courriel  
jami@durhamradio.com  
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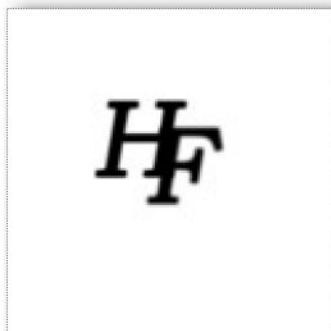
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