

**BACKGROUND TO CURRENT RAC
& FIELD ORGANIZATION RELATIONSHIP**

Radio Amateurs of Canada was created in 1993, out of the necessity to have one National Organization representing Amateur Radio Operators in Canada. The founding organizations, the Canadian Amateur Radio Federation Inc. and the Canadian Radio Relay League Inc. came to the "merger" table from two very diverse positions; on many of the issues one might even say totally opposing positions.

CARF had originally been created mainly because of a flag-waving, anti-American attitude quite prominent in the late 1960's and early 1970's. In a literal sense, CARF survived for 25 years because of the generosity of the many volunteers who served on the Board of Directors and Executive, people who dug deep in their own pockets to keep the organization financially afloat.

CRRL existed for many years (prior to the creation of CARF) as the Canadian Division of the ARRL. Resources which included books, QST magazine and funds were provided by ARRL to CRRL, aiding in the development of a strong entity in Canada. ARES/NTS was a thriving element of CRRL, particularly in Ontario, the region with the largest concentration of Amateur Operators in Canada. ARES/NTS was strong within CRRL, while CARF acknowledged having limited understanding of the importance and structure of ARES/NTS at the time.

During the "merger" negotiations, some of the CRRL officials of that day wanted RAC to keep ARES/NTS of the Field organization at arms length, and unfortunately, that is exactly what happened. Without the appropriate support from RAC, without adequate funding from RAC, and because of the significant inattention to ARES/NTS, we have now reached a crisis situation, particularly in the Ontario Section. The situation must change if ARES/NTS is to increase its viability, visibility and stature in Ontario and the rest of Canada, and if RAC is make headway in its effort to restore its own credibility among ARES/NTS supporters.

The current ARES/NTS problem, particularly in Ontario, is RAC's, whether we like it or not. RAC should have stepped up long ago and put forward a strong effort to develop a standardized ARES/NTS "service" entity across Canada. We believe it is not too late to rectify the situation.

Recently, there was an obvious rift within the Field Organization in Ontario. The ensuing arguments between ARES/NTS officials were brushed aside by RAC, as evidenced in the absence of any statement by the RAC Board. Tempers flared, insults were exchanged, the Section became fragmented, and yet RAC remained silent, to its own detriment. The Vice President of Field Services was offered little or direction by the RAC Board. The VP of Field Organization and the Ontario Section Manager were publicly humiliated on the air, called derogatory names, and yet the RAC Board remained silent. This inaction is unacceptable for the leaders of a National Organization. Equally unacceptable are the disparaging on-air comments from leaders and members within the Field Organization.

It is said that you can never have a better past, so what are you going to do to ensure a better future? In other words, what is done is done, and cannot be erased. How is RAC going to move forward, deal with the situation, improve the rapport with the ARES/NTS people at the grassroots level, and work towards the rebuilding of the Field Organization in Canada?

The first step is being taken today: We are present at this ARES/NTS Ontario meeting. We are listening, and are ready to take appropriate action to turn the situation around. This effort will require input by the senior ARES/NTS leaders, persons with far more Field Organization experience than many of the RAC Directors. We are asking for your help.

The RAC Board of Directors and Executive of today is not the Board of Directors and Executive from 1993. There are many new faces, some with strong ARES/NTS backgrounds, but many who, because of personal or regional circumstances, are not well versed in the importance of ARES/NTS. With the help of the people present in Orillia today, I hope we will be able to educate the RAC officials, elevate the importance of ARES/NTS in the minds of these volunteers, and work together towards a satisfactory resolution of this long-brewing problem.

It is apparent that RAC has displayed little, if any, leadership to the Field Organization volunteers, leaving them to fend for themselves. This has obviously created negative feelings towards RAC, leaving the situation wide open for ill will towards RAC officials. A number of dedicated volunteers have recently chosen to walk away from ARES/NTS; others have been drawn to a breakaway group in the Toronto area, a group with no RAC affiliation or political bent.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Communication between RAC Board of Directors and through the appropriate VP, to the Field Organization, including ARES/NTS officials will be improved and will be a two-sided conversation. RAC SHALL listen and act proactively as a result of this communication. RAC, under the terms of the "merger" in 1993, is the rightful holder and sponsor of the ARES/NTS identity. It is time that we accept the responsibility that goes along with that ownership. We have to determine the difficulties and problems, in consultation and conjunction with the hands-on ARES/NTS leaders, and develop joint solutions acceptable to both parties. A repeat situation can never be allowed to fester again.

Support of the Field Organization is an integral element of rebuilding the relationship between RAC and ARES/NTS. No longer can adequate financial support be withheld; resources need to be made readily available subject to necessary resources being available. (Such financial support must, of course, be based on adequate cash flow to RAC via increased membership numbers!) Procedures must be unified, ARES/NTS products must be developed in response to the specific needs expressed by the volunteers in the field where possible. The RAC Board will endeavor to address the funding difficulties in its fall budget deliberations.

RAC commits to developing a program of greater recognition of volunteers through individual contact, via public forums such as bulletins, the RAC website and through TCA. The importance of the Field Organization, in conjunction with ARES/NTS, needs to be brought to the forefront in discussions with all levels of government: federal, provincial and municipal. This will greatly enhance the image of the Amateur Service. It is a two-way street, however, and the volunteers in the field must present a professional and unified front in order to be rewarded with the kind of public recognition they so deserve. To that end, RAC needs to ensure that volunteers are properly trained, as well as adequately equipped to represent the service. In addition, volunteers in the Field Organization are often the sole contact with non RAC member amateurs and it is these volunteers who are best able to recruit new members into RAC and generate necessary cash flow to support additional operational capability.

In order to address some of the concerns and difficulties, the RAC Board of Directors, through a VP, will open a line of communication with the ARES/NTS officials on a regular basis, probably through regularly scheduled conference calls and e-mail communiqués. The Field Organization and ARES/NTS must be taken seriously, must be recognized as an integral operating arm of Radio Amateurs of Canada, and must be promoted as such.