

SLIDE #01

RAC Youth Education Program report February 2005

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The RAC Youth Education Program continues into its second year of operation..

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Each school which was enrolled in the program for the past school year has opted to continue with the program for this year, with the exception of Holy Cross school in Winnipeg, which underwent significant staffing changes, losing the teacher who was going to run the program. So far, we have been unable to find a school in Manitoba to undertake participation in the program.

Unfortunately, the sponsoring teacher at Walter Murray Collegiate in Saskatoon, Brian Walter, died very recently. Hopefully, his program can continue next year with new staff.

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The Youth Education Program Committee continues to be made up of:

- Bj. Madsen (VE5FX) serving as Chairman
- Neil Carleton (VE3NCE) who teaches at Almonte, ON
- Mark Richardson (VA3OBO) now a retired teacher from Burlington, ON
- Ken Pulfer (VE3PU) of Ottawa and
- Earle Smith (VE6NM) RAC Chairman, who serves "Ex Officio"

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To date, we have added four more schools to the Youth Education Program for a total of nine:

1. Drinkwater Elementary School in Duncan BC

- supported by the Cowican Valley Amateur Radio Society
- the principal of the school, Mike McMenamin (VE7EIC), along with Bob Bartlett (VE7CPO) of the sponsoring club, are working together to bring Amateur Radio to the students. They are interested in getting the school active on HF.

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2. Monsignor Doyle Catholic Secondary School in Cambridge, ON

- is supported by the Kitchener-Waterloo Amateur Radio Club
- Peter Bon (VA3PTB), the sponsoring teacher, has six students who are working toward their license and he is currently in the process of setting up a station in the school.

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3. Holy Family School in Grimshaw AB - a Junior High School in the Peace River Country of northern Alberta.

- sponsored by the McKenzie Regional Radio Club
- teacher Forbes Purcell (VE6FMP) has been very active in ARES and RAC activities. He and several other staff members are very enthused about getting an Amateur Radio station established at the school.

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4. Grand Manan Community School - a K-12 school on Grand Manan Island, NB.

- Roger LaChaine (VE9BO), the sponsoring teacher, is in charge of Technical Studies in the school. There is no club involved but all of the Amateurs on the island (three) along with individuals involved with communications and technology on the island, are behind the program. This is a fisheries-based community, and Roger's main thrust is, through the students, generate an awareness of the use of radio at sea and the safety issues which this would address. He hopes to get his students licensed in the process.

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The feedback which we received from the schools and clubs at the end of last school year was entirely positive. The clubs have been very helpful, providing expertise and assistance and lending - and in some cases donating - equipment to their partner schools.

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Clubs have found that the program has had a polarizing effect for them, offering them to achieve a new level of involvement with young people and their community.

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The schools have been very enthusiastic about what they have been doing. For example, an IRLP net has been started which has successfully allowed students in participating schools to talk to one another from their school stations.

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The Chestermere school has established a program which has allowed their students to exchange information and experiences with students as far away as Tasmania. School principals are getting involved, sending greetings, via Amateur Radio, across Canada to their counterparts in other schools.

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Neil Carleton of R. Tait Mackenzie Public School in Almonte, ON has spearheaded a very exciting project which allowed students from several of the YEP-involved schools to participate in the Kanatek Expedition,

currently climbing Mount Everest.

After the Expedition's audio presentation from base camp, students at schools across Canada took turns asking Professor Egan questions about his climbing adventure. This is a first in Canada to have students at schools from coast to coast connected to a Canadian expedition on Mount Everest by amateur radio through the Internet Radio Linking Project (IRLP), a unique Canadian invention.

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The National Eco-Pals Program is, for the first time, using Amateur Radio to extend their project allowing students to communicate - on the air - about environmental issues.

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RAC's official magazine, TCA, has published articles about the R. Tait McKenzie Public School, the Lester B. Pearson High School and the Chestermere Lake Middle School. An article about the use of Amateur Radio in schools appeared in the fall issue of Education Today, the magazine of the Ontario Public School Board's Association.

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A CD has been put together and distributed to the schools. It contains information and material gathered over the past year which might be of interest to the teachers and students as well as copies of lesson plans, news articles and pictures.

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A newsletter has been initiated, edited by Chairman Madsen, for distribution to participating teachers, schools and supporting Amateur Radio Clubs, which will keep them up to date with goings on in the Youth Education Program across the country.

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To date, 27 clubs across the country have come forward to accept the Challenge originally made by the Almonte Radio Repeater League in December of 2003 by making their own donations to the program. While this represents only about 5% of Canadian Amateur Radio Clubs, it is a beginning and shows that the Amateur Radio Community does understand the significance of this program.

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We have been successful in getting ICOM Canada to come on board as a principal sponsor for the Youth Education Program. We are currently in discussion with them about the extent to which they will undertake to support the program.

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An application was received from the R. Tait MacKenzie School in Almonte, ON for an HF transceiver for their program. This was approved and a second-hand ICOM IC-706 transceiver was purchased at a favourable price from RadioWorld.

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With the assistance of VP Jim Dean, the YEP acquired a Kenwood TS830 station from the Telus Mobility club station. This station has been offered to the Grand Manan school, depending on the continuing operation of their program into the next school year.

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RAC General Manager Debbie Norman has been helping us to find a source for possibly having Tee-shirts made for program participants. Hopefully, these will be available at the beginning of the next school year.

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The Youth Education Program continues as an ongoing successful undertaking. It is generating considerable enthusiasm for Amateur Radio with young people and those working with young people across the country. And, as we all know, the future of the service lies in the hands of these young people.

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Mark Spencer - WA8SME - provided me with some current information on the ARRL's "Big Project"

- To broaden their scope to meet state and national standards, their focus is on wireless technology rather than on Amateur Radio specifically.
- They have 137 schools in 39 states which have received monetary grants from the program.
- Additionally, there are hundreds if not thousands of other programs which use the material available on the WEB site. To date, there have been over 2000 downloads of information.

- Their characteristics for a successful program are the same as ours:
 - a motivated and talented teacher
 - strong support from the ham community
 - strong support from the school administration
 - strong support from the parents
- They have good and stable funding sources, with a couple of major donors.
- Interestingly, Mark said that the most successful programs are the ones that do NOT receive grant support from the ARRL. If teachers and the community are sufficiently motivated to run the program without assistance, the program will succeed!

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Bj. Madsen - VE5FX

RAC MidWest Regional Director

Chairman - RAC Youth Education Program