

Champlain Regional Repeater Association
Annual General Meeting 2022

May 26, 2022

7 p.m. via Zoom (to accommodate continuing COVID-19 concerns)

Present: Greg VE3ECI (Chair), Randy VA3RKS (1st Vice President), Tim VA3PYC (Secretary & Zoom host), James VE3KAW (Treasurer), Robert VA3AGN (Net Manager), Phil VE3HOA (Technical Director), Graham VE3AMN (Past President), Don VE3PM, Alan VA3IAH, Steve VE3KEG, Bill VE3TUC, Ed VA3EJT, Cristian VA3CTQ, Bob VE3YX, Ron VE3RKB

The agenda for the meeting was circulated via email in advance of the meeting.

Agenda

Call Meeting to Order

Review 2021 AGM Minutes: Tim VA3PYC

Executive Reports:

- President Report - Greg VE3ECI
- Treasurer Report - James VE3KAW
- Net Manager Report - Robert VA3AGN
- Technical Lead Report - Phil VE3HOA

Special Project Updates:

- Web Master transition Jim - V01JH
- Next Generation EchoLink - Ed VA3EJT
- CRRA/STP History Curation - Tim VA3PYC & James VE3KAW
- STP2 Power Plan - Graham VE3AMN & Phil VE3HOA
- STP2 Allstar - Phil VE3HOA
- STP2 antenna array FM/DMR multi coupling - Phil VE3HOA

Nominations & Elections

New Business & Member Input Adjourn Meeting

The meeting began at 7:10 p.m.

Motion to accept the agenda as presented (Tim, Bill)

Passed unanimously.

Review of the minutes – outstanding business from previous meetings

Tim VA3PYC noted that one issue that warrants continued attention that was noted in last year's minutes pertains to membership. As Greg noted last year, "Membership is stable but stagnant. Without donations we would have a tough time paying the bills. We need a vision for realistic growth." Tim noted that he expects we will continue discussion of this issue tonight and in upcoming executive committee meetings in the year ahead.

Motion to accept the minutes of the past meeting as posted. (Graham, Greg)

Discussion: Robert VA3AGN asked if the CRRA website still has a list of paid memberships? Greg VE3ECI explained that this was difficult to maintain and confusing. Bill VE3TUC agreed, providing some background to the problem of keeping it up to date. It was agreed that this web feature will not be used.

Motion to accept the minutes of the 2021 AGM passed unanimously.

Executive Reports:

1. President's Report - Greg VE3ECI

Highlights

- Financial outlook offers opportunities for Equipment/Project Investment. We have some funds available for projects etc. We will discuss options at upcoming quarterly meetings, and we invite all members to make suggestions.
- Next Generation EchoLink is now in service with VE3STP FM thanks to Ed. It is working very well.
- Phil VE3HOA installed a Res-Lok 8 cavity multi-coupler and replaced the hybrid ring duplexer on VE3STP FM.
- Member/Friends Meetings using Zoom have been a successful transition from quarterly Executive only meetings. However, it was decided that quarterly meetings may be too frequent. Need to consider what is the best frequency, perhaps alternating Open Members meeting and Executive Only meetings quarterly via Zoom.
- We've had the resumption of Saturday Mini-Net with Jim VA3JER. It would be nice to expand back to Sunday night if possible.
- Finally, Greg noted that we have landed on an ideal Renfrew Wednesday breakfast location which is now Finnigans (302 Raglan Street, Renfrew).

Going Forward

- Greg noted that he would like to see us resolve the VE3STP VHF FM Repeater QRM Enigma ("the intermittent noise problem"). This week the repeater has been very quiet, but this may be perhaps because after the

- storm there have been many locations without power, potentially knocking out an offending RF source?
- AC Power Stability – Greg wants the CRRA executive to consider whether we need to rethink our power approach? We have been monitoring the AC power because there has been an issue with fluctuation. More details are provided later in the meeting.
 - The ChamplainRepeater.ca domain will expire in September. Need to renew license.

Prioritizing, Priming and Completing Projects including:

- Remote Power Control
- Main antenna array multi-coupling with 145.39- Mhz
- Allstar Linking
- DMR Linking
- Winlink VARA capability?

Summer-end Social Event? Greg noted that we used to have a corn boil or similar end-of-summer event, and now that COVID is less of a threat, we should consider planning something for summer 2022.

VE3YYX Arnprior - VA3RKS is the callsign custodian, but we don't have a plan for what we're doing with this repeater and location. This has been an issue for some time, and it is something we should address in the year ahead.

Looking Backwards with Thanks

Greg VE3ECI extended his thanks to a number of members around various initiatives and activities including:

Graham VE3AMN – was thanked for his many contribution over the years: Past president (at various times, providing important leadership) technical expertise and leadership for building and maintaining the radio equipment, as well as very generous equipment donations.

After his opening remarks, Greg invited Bill VE3TUC to speak. Bill nominated Graham for an honorary lifetime membership given his many contributions to the CRRA. Bill made the following remarks:

Thanks Greg and good evening all.

I'm Bill Mantell VE3TUC, a member in good standing, and I've requested a few minutes of time tonight in order to nominate a member for a Honorary Lifetime Membership. Our Constitution provides for this award as a means of recognizing a member's outstanding support over a long period of time. The article reads in part as follows. "An individual, whether a member or not, who has over a long period of

time, made significant contributions to either the maintenance or operation of repeater VE3STP or of the success and well-being of the Association itself may be granted an Honorary Life Membership.” The Honorary Lifetime Membership grants the same privileges as a regular member and a paid lifetime membership.

I believe that Graham Patterson VE3AMN qualifies in spades for this award and I wish to nominate him for the Honorary Life Membership this evening, as he leaves the Executive after approximately eight years of service to CRRA.

In respect to the success and well-being of the Association, Graham has served a term as a First Vice President two consecutive terms as President and finally a term as Immediate Past President at a time when the club badly needed strong leadership. Through his leadership, vision and enthusiasm he rejuvenated the group, and in his roll as Technical Director, outlined a number of major projects on which he has worked to this day to bring to fruition.

With respect to the making of significant contributions to the repeater I would like to describe a couple of projects which have had a major impact on the repeater and/or on the operation of CRRA and the contributions made to them by Graham. Both of these activities are well known to most of you, so I'll stay out of the weeds. I must point out here that when it came to implementation, these projects were not a “One Man Show,” they required the support of many members. It was, however, Graham's vision and leadership which brought them to fruition.

I'd like now to take you quickly through a couple of projects to illustrate the degree to which Graham has influenced the development of CRRA.

Site 2

The Site 2 project began when Greg VE3ECI made property available to the GO Zoom ISP. Graham saw immediately the possibilities and successfully established CRRA's credibility with the owner, leading to permission being granted to locate the building on site and to mount antennas on their tower. Graham procured the building from the CPR and supervised the many aspects of its installation. Through his personal contacts with a professional climber and the odd bottle of Scotch and good cigars, our antennas, coax, etc. were mounted on the tower pro bono, and we were good to go. Over several years, Graham has donated a controller, FM radio equipment, including DMR, to improve and expand the system; and as the Technical Director contributed countless hours of his time toward its upkeep.

Before moving on, just a personal note which I think illustrates Graham's vision for the repeater. Shortly after it became obvious that the move to Site 2 was a go, Graham showed me photographs of a very successful repeater near Barrie and shared with me his dream to create a similar repeater and one considered to be the best repeater in Ontario. Many years later and after a lot of your effort Graham, and with the help of others, you are seeing your dream come true.

Site One

Another project Graham initiated was the removal of Site 1 from the grid. He contributed the solar panels, supervised their installation, purchased and set up the controller. After some fine tuning the system is now providing a free stable source of power for the Packet system.

A secondary but very important aspect of removing the site from the grid was the impact on the club's finances. At the time, the cost of insurance and hydro made it impossible to upgrade our systems, and, without insurance, it was impossible to hire qualified climbers. More recently the fact that the club was incorporated and carried insurance resulted in Go Zoom granting access to the site 2 tower for our climbers.

The budget surpluses that CRRA is now enjoying is a direct result of Graham's desire to get the site off of "Wynn's Grid," as he likes to call it.

In summary, I submit that the many years that Graham has committed to the CRRA as Vice President, President, Immediate Past President and Technical Director as well as his leadership in modernizing and upgrading the repeater system, often at his own expense, meets the requirement set out in our Constitution. I call upon the membership to support this Nomination.

Bill then formally moved that Graham be recognized with this honorary life-time membership (seconded by Greg). With great enthusiasm among those in attendance, the motion was passed unanimously.

Greg VE3ECI then continued with his recognition of other members of the CRRA:

- Phil VE3HOA – was thanked by Greg for his numerous trips up the mountain to tune and tweak all aspects of the repeater set up, and most importantly his technical expertise, including acquiring and installing the Res-Lok filter system, going above and beyond to maintain the repeater, even spending part of Christmas Eve at the STP shack, as well as generous equipment donations.
- VA3EJT Ed – was thanked for the Next Generation EchoLink development and deployment. It was an excellent project in every regard, particularly the documentation and systematic approach, involving many members throughout the process.
- VE3STP Net Controllers VE3KAW, VA3PYC, VA3IAH, VA3AGN, VA3JER for their work nightly as they provide a great deal of visibility for the CRRA.
- Matt VA3AL - for taking on the WebMaster role
- Jim V01JH - for maintaining champlainrepeater.ca
- Robert VA3AGM - for continuing as Net Manger

- Randy VA3RKS and Allen VE3JGU our outgoing VPs for their work on the executive over the past years
- Tim VA3PYC - for organizing our meetings using his Zoom account.

2. Treasurer’s Report - James VE3KAW

James noted that: 1) memberships are due January 1st annually, but we have been remiss this year in notifying members to pay their dues; 2) to pay membership you can do it by e-transfer to ve3kaw@2342.ca or email James for his mailing address if you want to mail a cheque as some members do; 3) current memberships are 20 paid in full (note the chart below is incorrect in this regard, corrected after the meeting); 4) the bank has changed its services to our account, and we can no longer pay bills or transfer funds with e-transfers; and, finally in terms of finances, 5) the cost of gasoline is becoming an issue in terms of maintenance of the STP site. The CRRA should consider reimbursing members who travel to the site to maintain VE3STP. This will be discussed at the next Executive Meeting.

		2021 Balance forward	\$2,773.18	Membership
		Membership, Donations Interest	\$1,486.23	
		sub total	\$4,259.41	
				8 Active paid members
		Expenses	\$1,407.47	3 life members
		Service charges	\$4.50	
		2022 Summary end of year	\$2,847.44	

Note on expenses: Battery reimbursement \$802.99, Fan replacement 180.76, Domaine Reg 11.29, RAC Insurance 515.42 Plus som misc bank fees

3. Net Manager’s Report - Robert VA3AGN

Robert reported that we only had the net 5 nights a week for much of the year until Jim VA3JER began doing Saturdays on February 19th. Thanks Jim!

After removing missing data and nights that we missed a net due to meetings or repeater failure, we had a total of 277 nets with complete data.

For these 277 nets, we spent 8,723 minutes in session, or about 145 and a half hours on the net!

This makes sense because the nets run on average about 36 minutes.

The longest time for any one net was 66 minutes with VE3ECI on July 22, 2021. VA3AGN wasn’t far behind with 60 minutes on January 7, 2022.

With that in mind, here are the average times per net controller. You’ll note that the two longest nets are also by net controllers with the longest average net times! The

average net times by controller in descending order are:

VE3ECI = 41 minutes/net
 VA3AGN = 40 minutes/net
 VA3PYC = 37 minutes/net
 VE3KAW = 36 minutes/net
 VE3KEG = 36 minutes/net
 VE2BJZ = 36 minutes/net
 VA3IAH = 35 minutes/net
 VA3JER = 30 minutes/net

There were a total of 2692 check ins for these 277 nets, or an average of approximately 10 check ins per night.

The most number of check ins on any single net was 20 with VA3PYC followed by 19 with VE3KAW.

The fewest check ins for any net was 2 for VA3AGN on a Saturday (not surprisingly), March 19, 2022.

The net controller who ran the most nets was VE3ECI with 62 nets (who, as we joke, wins the free trip to Calabogie!).

The number of nets run by the other net controllers are below in descending order:

VA3AGN = 57 nets
 VA3PYC = 50 nets
 VE3KAW = 47 nets
 VE3KEG = 30 nets
 VA3IAH = 22 nets
 VA3JER = 7 nets
 VE2BJZ = 2 nets

In closing Robert added that we continue to ask for other net controllers either to substitute for existing net controllers, act as back up, or take on Sunday so we can go back to a 7-day-a-week schedule.

Robert expressed his thanks to all of the net controllers for their participation this past year.

4. Technical Lead Report - Phil VE3HOA

Phil congratulated Graham on his lifetime membership recognition with special thanks for his mentoring as he took over the role of technical support. Phil noted that the noise issue this year was an important focus, with the performance at Christmas such that the repeater was just about unusable. The hybrid ring filter seemed to be a possible problem, so Phil contacted VE3DGN who got him in touch with VE3HYS

(who maintains CRA) who provided Phil with some Sinclair filters which he tuned and installed on Christmas Eve. The noise seemed to be controlled completely at first, but slowly crept back in again. Phil is continuing to investigate why this is happening.

Phil also replaced the exhaust fan which had failed, which is an important step before the summer months.

The only other issue has been the power. Hydro One seems to have a problem with voltage control on the power coming into Site 1. Greg VE3ECI contacted Hydro One who addressed the problem, and Phil continues to monitor the line voltage (varies from 105V to 140V which can trip out the power supply). If there are still line voltage fluctuations at this time, they are minor enough not to affect the power supply.

Phil provided a brief update on the Allstar system he has set up using a FM repeater acquired from the Almonte Club that is linked, using a Raspberry Pi and Allstar software, to VE6EN (Andrew in Calgary) who has set up a link to the XLX196 Reflector. This now provides digital access to operators with only a FM transceiver.

Special Project Updates:

1. Web Master transition from Jim V01JH given his move to Newfoundland. Jim was absent, so tabled to another time.
2. Next Generation EchoLink - Ed VA3EJT
The system has been working well for two months. Ed has been monitoring it, and he noted two small software issues: 1) spurious packets at times, but this seems to resolve itself, as well 2) when a user connects and reconnects, this results in a different IP assignment, and the server will refuse the connect initially (but it too resolves on a subsequent attempt to login).
3. CRRA/STP History Curation - Tim VA3PYC & James VE3KAW
Tim VA3PYC reported that no progress has been made with this project for much the same reasons as reported last year, continuing COVID concerns and time conflicts with work and family. Given his pending retirement, VA3PYC hopes to find more time to pick up the interviews, particularly with VE3AAC, VE3AMN, VE3TUC. Tim and James are looking for suggestions for other interviewees.
4. STP2 Power Plan - Graham VE3AMN & Phil VE3HOA
Graham is taking a colleague up to VE3STP in early June to assess the power. This colleague has some equipment including large conductors and lugs to connect all the components together (storage batteries, rectifiers, etc.) with large enough wires so that they "see each other" more effectively.

5. STP2 Allstar - Phil VE3HOA
Noted briefly above and tabled to another meeting.
6. STP2 antenna array FM/DMR multi coupling - Phil VE3HOA
Tabled to another meeting.

Nominations & Elections

Greg asked if anyone had candidates to nominate for the open positions of Vice President 1 and 2. Hearing none, Greg made two nominations for Vice Presidents 1 & 2. These were: Ed VA3EJT (VP1) and Alan VA3IAH (VP2); seconded by Graham VE3AMN and Tim VA3PYC, respectively. The nominated candidates were acclaimed to these positions.

Graham VE3AMN offered special thanks to Randy VA3RKS for doing all of the wiring at the VE3STP site after the new shack was installed there. All members joined in their thanks and appreciation for his expertise and work over the years, as well as his leadership as one of the CRRA Vice Presidents this past year.

New Business & Member Input

No new business was raised. No member input.

Greg invited each member in attendance to make closing comments. More words of thanks were offered to the many members who have been key to keeping the repeater on air.

Greg VE3ECI moved to adjourn, seconded by Tim VA3PYC. All in favour.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:19 p.m.