

Dave Johnson and the 'quad squad'

# Ham radio gives new life to quadraplegics

Ham radio equipment is giving five quadraplegics at St. Joseph's Hospital in Guelph a new lease on life.

"It's a whole new world, it has opened up new horizons for all of us," says Dave Johnson of Acton, one of the members. "And it's a fascinating hobby."

For a quadraplegic, life can be a pretty boring affair. You can only watch so much television in a day. Playing cards, chess or checkers requires the aid of a volunteer to carry out your moves.

But the "quad squad" (as the quadraplegics at St. Joseph's call themselves) has found there are ways to operate ham radio equipment without the use of human helpers and the pastime is occupying more and more of their time.

Thanks to president Rocco Furfaro and volunteer members of the Guelph Amateur Radio Club, the quads have been fully trained and government licensed to operate a ham system and \$2,000 worth of new equipment is expected to arrive shortly.

Only problem is, the hams don't have quite enough money to finance the equipment. Today their fund is about \$450 short of its goal and the club has appealed for public donations to help put the fund over the top.

At present they are using a transmitter and radio sets borrowed from GARC members, while waiting for the new equipment to come.

"It's a lot of fun," says Johnson. He wishes he had

become interested in ham radio before his accident, in the summer of 1972, which left him virtually crippled from the neck down.

It was in July of 1972 that Dave, some friends and two of his three children went swimming in Fairy Lake, three blocks from his Acton home.

"We had been swimming there every day, all summer," he said. But one dive into the water changed Dave's life. Somehow he hit the water at an odd angle and the force of the impact broke his spine, near the top. "It was a real freak accident, there were no bruises and I didn't strike anything. It was just the way I hit the water."

Paralyzed, he sank into the water and would have drowned if his children and friends hadn't pulled him out.

Then followed a lengthy rehabilitation process to ensure he could continue life in as near to normal fashion as possible. He spent six weeks in a stricker frame at Toronto General Hospital, his neck in traction. Then followed 13 months at Lyndhurst Lodge, a rehabilitation centre, where his neck and shoulder muscles were strengthened and he was taught how to breathe properly.

In April of 1974 he was transferred to St. Joseph's continuing care unit in Guelph. There were only two other quads at St. Joseph's when Dave arrived—there are seven now.

To date, Dave has no hope of recovery and is destined to

spend the rest of his life in bed or in a wheelchair. "We heard the Russians were developing an operation that would fix this kind of thing, but we don't have any definite word on it yet," said Dave. Then he grinned, "maybe they're keeping it to themselves."

It's quite a change for a man who, at 39, has had an active and normal life. Born and raised in Milton, he spent 19 years working at P. L. Robertson Manufacturing as a fork lift truck driver.

Married in 1960, he has three sons and the family has lived 12 years in Acton.

The ham radio business began about a year ago when Mr. Furfaro, a contractor in Guelph, visited the hospital and was touched by the plight (and inactivity) of the quadraplegics. Being president of the Guelph radio club, he convinced his club members they should help the hospital's wheelchair brigade learn about ham radio. Several members loaned equipment and volunteered their time to visit the hospital and teach ham systems to the quads.

One of the instructors is Harold Twitchell, an Air Canada pilot who lives at Campbellville.

Biggest thrill for everyone was the day in mid-January when the Department of Communications presented certificates of qualification to the five course graduates.

Besides Dave, club members using the call letters VE 3-SJH (the SJH is for the hospital name) are Meff Rifi, Del Rennie, Don Finnamore and Ken Sch-



A HAM RADIO SYSTEM has brought new hope and excitement into the lives of the "quad squad"—a group of five quadraplegics at St. Joseph's Hospital in Guelph. Dave Johnson of Acton, formerly of Milton, is one of the radio club members who enjoys voice contact with other operators around the country. Meff Rifi is pictured with the temporary equipment, being used until \$2,000 can be raised to buy new radio equipment the club can call its own.

neider. Meff Rifi, probably the most active of the quintet as he has limited use of his right arm and hand, proudly shows visitors the temporary equipment and demonstrates how the radio speaker can be pushed to the "on" position by the operator's cheek.

"It's a lot of fun, you get to

know some of the radio contacts by their voice and we're making a whole pile of new friends," he said.

To date the club has reached fellow hams in places like Orangeville, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Stratford, and their furthest away contacts have

been in Ohio and Maryland. Once a new radio transmitter is installed, they may be able to reach around the world with their radio.

"We can hear people talking from overseas on this set, but we can't contact them as we don't have enough power," Meff explained. The hospital has set aside a

small room for the radio club and a special desk has been ordered which will allow the operators to slide in under the desk top with their wheelchairs.

"It's really heart-warming," he said. "Through the concern of others, anything can become a reality. We owe a big debt of gratitude to the Guelph Radio Club members and everyone else who has helped."

The fund for the radio club was kicked off by the radio club with a donation of \$300 worth of equipment. Guelph Rotary Club added \$500 to the fund and the quads have been running raffles and making public appeals to raise the rest.

"The 'quad squad's' involvement with ham radio is believed to be the first of its kind in this area and club members are hoping the idea will spread to other hospitals and other quadraplegics, whether they are at home or in institutions. "This may spread across the country," says Meff. "Maybe it can ease the loneliness of those who are confined to their homes."

Raffles are a continuing affair around St. Joseph's, as the "quad squad" has held several of them over the past few years. At first they raised funds to buy themselves electrically operated wheelchairs, so they wouldn't be so dependent on others.

Now they are trying to raise \$8,000 to install electric doors for the hallway of their hos-

pital wing, so they can go in and out without having to wait for someone to open and close the doors for them. Some of the raffle funds are also going toward the radio system, and to date the radio

fund only lacks about \$450. Donations can be sent addressed to Ham Radio Fund, St. Joseph's Hospital, 20 Westmount Rd., Guelph, Ont. Sister Beatrice Schnarr, executive director.

## Naturalizer...

FAMOUS FOR QUALITY

The Shoe with the Beautiful Fit




SEE THE NEW SPRING ARRIVALS

\$24<sup>00</sup> to \$32<sup>00</sup>

(FALL AND WINTER STOCK \$19.95)

Reductions Continue On All WINTER FOOTWEAR

## Sweetman's SHOES

19 Mill St. E. 853-0360

## Parents helped drivers

At least two other school bus drivers, who had to negotiate roads in the Pineview area during the terrible January 28 snowstorm, are thanking their lucky stars for the help they received from parents.

Some are suggesting the incident at the Fifth Line-Steeles Avenue intersection would not have been as serious, if parents there had helped the bus driver.

Elizabeth Rock, who drives a route, which heads east from Pineview towards the Terra Cotta town line, said children on her bus were able to get to their homes with the help of cars. Some parents took children from their neighborhood as well, she said.

"Let parents help me," she said. "I don't know what I would have done without their help."

Mrs. Rock said she also picked up some motorists whose cars were stranded.

Among the passengers on her bus were a small baby and two dogs. She was also able to pick up two lost children, who

had been mistakenly let off another bus at the wrong corner in the blinding snowstorm.

A second school bus driver told of the help she received from a parent volunteer, while stranded at Ashgrove for 3½ hours. Retarded children were passengers on that bus.

Mrs. Dave Moffatt, who bundled herself up in a snowmobile suit and walked to the Fifth Line-Steeles Avenue intersection, told Sunday's meeting she was prepared to take her own two children through the storm, but no more. Mrs. Moffatt said she told the driver that what she was to do with the others was her problem.

The meeting was organized by parents, bitterly upset that 14 children living on the Third, Fourth and Fifth Lines were let off a bus at the intersection of the Fifth Line and Steeles Avenue during the chilling snowstorm of Friday, January 28. The bus was unable to move up the Fifth Line. The children, some as young as seven years of age, had to walk at least half a mile to the nearest home. Some children suffered frostbite, as a result of the long hike in the bitter cold.

—Valentine's Day, Feb. 14, falls on a Monday this year.

## Town offices cramped . . .

(Continued from page 2) ment should be close to the building and engineering departments to lessen paper work and build team work.

He suggests an expansion of the administration building and urges a storage area to be set up for clerk's, engineering and planning department records. Venditti says there is also a need for a technical staff room.

He says the public is running around in circles trying to get required information on related items from his department and engineering, building and zoning departments.

Bulkema says there isn't sufficient office space in his Main Street quarters and cold air is getting in through the window despite the fact masking tape has been used to keep out drafts.

Gray says he thinks his staff should be located at the rinks and pools to be close to the people but does see advantage to himself, a secretary and the facility superintendent being in a central municipal building for improved communications with other departments.

He warned if the staff increases as the town grows there won't be any room at Alcott Arena offices for them unless some of those at the rink are moved.

Gray stated the office space at the rink is restrictive but adequate and washroom facilities at the rink and the wards one and two recreation co-ordinators office in Acton are inadequate. He added the rink's electrical system is taxed to its capacity.

The finance department seems to be in the worst shape where there are 18 people working plus two people from the fire department. King says his department quarters are "not adequate

either in terms of actual space or conditions under which employees work."

He reports his department is breaking two sections of the Industrial Safety Act. One section says if there are more than nine female employees there must be two washrooms and another section states if there are more than 10 female employees there must be a room or other space set up which is private and has chairs or cots. The finance building doesn't have a ladies lounge, only one woman's washroom and has 13 female employees.

King also says there isn't space for proper storage and there isn't adequate room for the auditors who comes in frequently.

He reported the building has been cold this winter because the boiler is not big enough for the building and \$5,600 needs to be spent to replace it. King pointed out five years ago it was recommended the boiler be replaced.

No more electrical machines can be hooked into the building's system or it will be overloaded and it will cost \$3,000 to upgrade the wiring.

The sanitary sewer line leading into the building should be replaced and will cost \$750 and the twister last summer caused \$1,200 damage to a roof which needed to be replaced at a cost of \$8,000.

King concluded there are

definite advantages to his department joining others in an expanded administration building.

## To see report

Halton Board of Education Trustee H. H. "Bert" Hinton has assured Pineview area parents they'll have access to any final report the board makes on the January 28 incident in which 14 children were let off a school bus during a snowstorm.

Hinton is on a five man committee investigating the incident, along with Harley Lishman, a board official, Cliff Shaw of Norton Bus Lines, Pineview Principal Grant Hutchins and Craig Kerr, representing Pineview area parents.

Hinton has suggested the formation of a parents' advisory committee for the whole north area, with representatives from Acton, Speyside, Glen Williams, Pineview etc. He said such a committee could act as a clearing house to get criticism on a variety of topics out in the open.

Pineview area parents are also concerned that the bus driver involved in the snowstorm incident may have been using obscene language in the presence of children.

Hinton said it's questions like that one, which should be



**WELCOME SERVICE**

If you are new in town or know someone who is

PHONE **853-3902**

**TOWN OF HALTON HILLS RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

**All Persons or Groups Wishing To Rent Gordon Alcott Mem. Arena to operate:**

**SUMMER HOCKEY SCHOOL and/or SUMMER FIGURE SKATING SCHOOL**

during the 1977 summer months:

**Apply in writing to:**

**TOWN OF HALTON HILLS RECREATION DEPT., 36 MAIN ST. S., GEORGETOWN, ONT.**

**Closing Date for all proposals Feb. 25th 12 noon, 1977.**

## Good Citizenship deserves a medal

Do you know anyone here in Ontario who—through selflessness, humanity and kindness without expecting anything in return—has made this a better province in which to live?

That's the kind of person for whom the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship was established. Recipients are selected by an independent Advisory Council of Ontario citizens whose honorary chairman is the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province.

Anyone may nominate a person for the Ontario Medal, and nomination forms are available by writing:

Executive Secretary  
Advisory Council  
Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship  
Queen's Park  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1

Making a nomination is itself an act of appreciation for good citizenship. All nominations should be received by April 15, 1977.



ONTARIO MEDAL FOR GOOD CITIZENSHIP

## A-B SUPERMARKET

9 Mill St. East • Acton 853-0650

• PRICES EFFECTIVE FEB. 9, 10, 11, 12  
• WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO LIMIT QUANTITIES.

<p>Grade "A" Fresh Large Sizes</p> <p><b>CHICKENS</b> (4 lbs. &amp; up) <b>65¢</b></p> <p><b>CHICKEN IN A BASKET</b> <b>69¢</b></p> <p>US No. 1 <b>LETTUCE</b> <b>39¢</b></p> <p>Ont. No. 1 <b>COOKING ONIONS</b> <b>59¢</b></p> <p>Ont. No. 1 <b>CARROTS</b> <b>49¢</b></p> <p>Ont. Fancy <b>McINTOSH APPLES</b> <b>\$1.19</b></p>	<p>Maple Leaf 1 lb. Pkg. <b>SIDE BACON \$1.39</b></p> <p>Schneider's 8 oz. Pkg. <b>SANDWICH SPREAD ROLLS 49¢</b></p> <p>Schneider's 1 lb. Pkg. <b>MINI SIZZLERS \$1.19</b></p> <p>Seafest 6 oz. cont. (Save 56¢) <b>ASSORTED FLAVOURS YOGURT 4/\$1.00</b></p> <p>McCain 2 Lb. Pkg. (Save 20¢) <b>FROZEN KERNEL CORN 79¢</b></p> <p>McCain 19 Oz. Pkg. (Save 30¢) <b>DEEP 'N DELICIOUS FROZEN CHOCOLATE or VANILLA CAKE \$1.19</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SHARP SHOPPERS' SPECIALS</b></p> <p>Vanguard 1 Lb. Tin (Save 40¢) <b>RED SOCKEYE SALMON \$1.99</b></p> <p>Heinz 10 Oz. Tins (Save 25¢) <b>TOMATO OR VEGETABLE SOUP 5/\$1.00</b></p> <p>Schneider's 16 Oz. Pkg. (Save 40¢) <b>CHEESE SLICES \$1.29</b></p> <p>Carnation 11 Oz. Jar <b>COFFEEMATE 89¢</b> (Save 16¢)</p> <p>Libby's 14 Oz. Tins (Save 22¢) <b>MIXED VEGETABLES OR PEAS &amp; CARROTS 3/89¢</b></p> <p>Grade "A" Medium <b>EGGS 79¢</b> Doz.</p> <p>Seafest 3 Qt. Bag or Jug • Deposit <b>FRESH 2% MILK \$1.19</b></p> <p>Maxwell House 10 Oz. Jar <b>INSTANT COFFEE \$3.89</b></p> <p>Pantry Shelf 28 Oz. Tins (Save 10¢) <b>PEACHES 59¢</b></p> <p>Kraft 12 Oz. Jars (Save 10¢) <b>PEANUT BUTTER 59¢</b></p> <p>Kleenex 2 Roll Pkg. (Save 20¢) <b>PAPER TOWELS 89¢</b></p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------