

## Club holds simulated radio emergency exercise

Amateur radio operators in Kincardine, Goderich and Port Elgin were challenged Saturday morning Apr. 4 with the news that three feet of snow had been dropped on the area, crippling travel on the highways since Wednesday. A second storm, combined with high winds and freezing rain, had started on Friday night, making highways impassable.

Jim Coverley, Emergency Coordinator for Bruce County, had created this whole scenario to simulate for amateur radio operators a realistic emergency in order to test the amateur network's principal operating activity for service to the community. Coverley notified key leaders that authorities had asked for help with communications to deal with this simulated emergency now that the area had sporadic power outages and phone lines were dead in parts of the region. Some people, in the scenario created

on a computer by Jim Coverley, were stranded, without power and heat. Their world had become a skating rink. Community message lines were overloaded with requests for snow vehicle deliveries of medical supplies, repair services and reports on conditions.

Pre-arranged "nets" or teams of amateur radio operators were initiated to respond to the conditions simulated in Coverley's scenario using amateur radio's highly organized format for "traffic" or message handling. The net was tested as Coverley added new conditions to challenge the resourcefulness and imagination of the radio operators during the morning. If power was lost in Kincardine at 10 a.m. according to Coverley's pre-arranged plan, then radio operators switched to battery-operated equipment, or in a couple of cases, walked to near-by radio operator's homes

to complete their messages by sharing resources or equipment.

Jim Coverley was well pleased with the operating skill of the radio amateurs in our area, and their ability to overcome the difficulties which the simulation presented as challenges. As a public service, this test was a great success. Our local group has demonstrated a high level of skill in meeting communication needs in our community under emergency conditions, and according to Coverley, enjoyed the challenges this test provided.

The fact is that amateur radio operators do find pleasure in using their operating skills for public service. Typical of Amateur Radio, they discussed their test experience on the air Monday night, pointing out improvements for next time - real or simulated.

Bill Barnard,  
VE3 UDC