

# emo NewsLetter

Summer 2008

## Three Decades On The Air With YARA

After thirty years of active involvement with YARA (Yukon Amateur Radio Association), founding member Ron McFadyen (call sign VY1RM) is stepping down as president of the organization he helped form in 1976. Ron served on YARA's executive committee through most of those years, more than half the time as president or vice-president.

"Retiring isn't the right word—I'll still be involved in YARA," Ron says, "but it consumes a huge amount of time, and I want to have more time to pursue the hobby myself instead of always organizing."

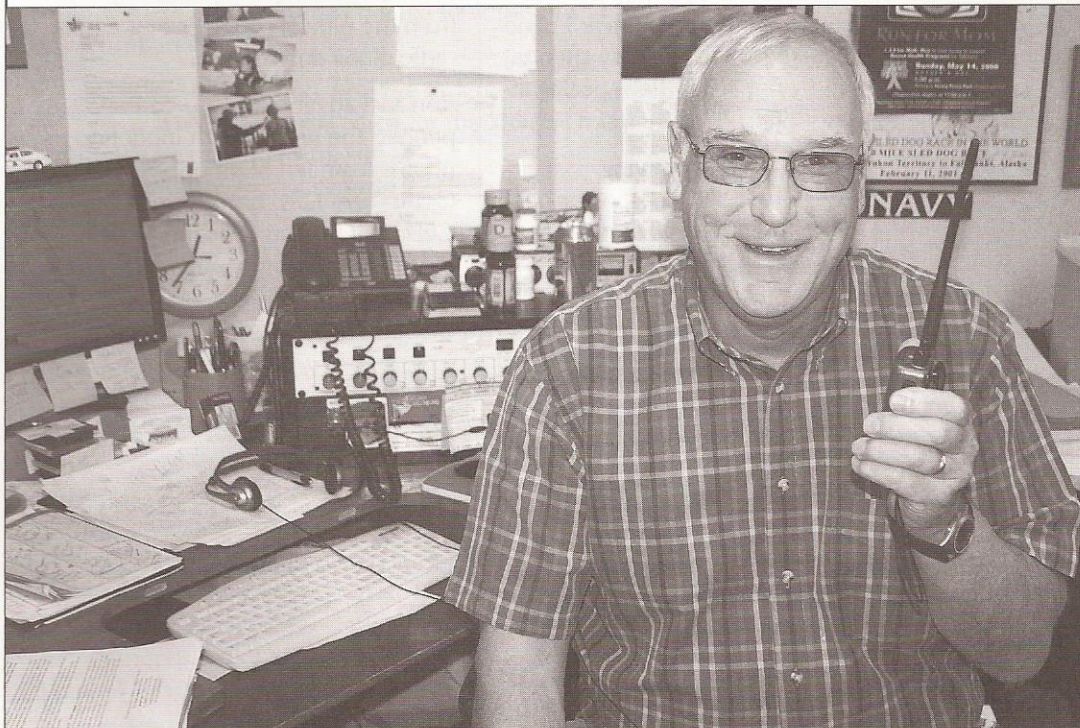
A tireless volunteer, Ron's name has become synonymous with YARA, a club of 'ham radio' enthusiasts. His talent for 'scrounging' on behalf of the association and his ability to foster partnerships has been key to the development of YARA's current system of twenty repeaters. Ron even has his own 74-foot tower in his Riverdale backyard.

Starting with the first amateur repeater installed on Haeckel Hill in late 1976, Ron was involved in numerous YARA events and infrastructure projects. He also participated in many emergencies over the years including the Cassiar

Northwestel outage, the Ferry Hill Northwestel fire, the 2004 Swift River fire, the 2007 Marsh Lake flood and multiple search and rescue operations.

Through his involvement in events like the Kluane-Chilkat International Bike Relay, Klondike Road Relay and the 2007 Canada Winter Games, Ron helped connect YARA with the community.

"I'm one of two volunteers who've been involved in the road relay since the beginning," he says. In addition to running the race 22 times, Ron has



YARA'S Ron McFadyen looks forward to having more time for the hobby he loves.

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been a constant presence along the route with YARA. "We transmit data for race organizers, and we provide safety communications coverage in case of an emergency. But definitely the most important reason we're out there is to test our preparedness."

YARA members have grown accustomed to Ron's enthusiasm – "I have an idea!" – and look to him for inspiration in their own involvement in the group. "We [YARA members] meet every Saturday at A&W for breakfast to talk about 'stuff.' We dream up projects and

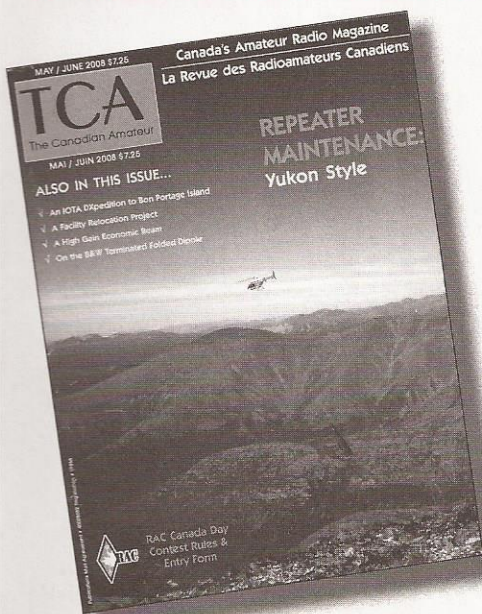
share ideas. It started with just two of us, and now about 15 turn out each week."

Though he's stepping down as president, Ron will continue to contribute to YARA in many ways. One gets the sense that he isn't going to slow down at all,

but instead, is relishing the opportunity to have more time for personal projects like the radio device he just installed on his car.



## YARA Goes National



Yukon's amateur radio community got to showcase their talents to a national audience with a recent cover story in the May/June issue of The Canadian Amateur, Canada's Amateur Radio magazine. YARA's story, Repeater Maintenance: Yukon Style, told of a 'routine' day spent at 7,200 feet replacing the repeater at Pilot Mountain.

The cover photo – showing Helidynamics' Bell 407 slinging the 1,000-pound repeater through Yukon's wild mountain ranges – highlighted the unique challenges of maintaining an amateur radio network in the Yukon. It also

showcased the skills and commitment of YARA members—on this particular day, the crew completed their installation and had it fully operational within six hours. The scope and scale of YARA projects is a major departure from the typical activities of amateur radio clubs down south.

Ron McFadyen and George Privett penned the article, with input and photos from Jeff Stanhope, Geoff Grant, Tom Law, Bob Burrell, Paul Getson and Scott Williamson. For more information about YARA, check out their website at [www.yara.ca](http://www.yara.ca).



## Summer SAR-style

You've probably seen them on the river, in the air and on the road while you participate in some of the territory's most exciting summer events. Yukon's volunteer-driven search and rescue organizations are active in the background at a number of major community and sporting events, providing

services ranging from patrols to radio communications to boat safety.

June is a big month with both the **Yukon River Quest** and the **Kluane Chilkat International Bike Relay**. YARA provides radio relays along the mountainous bike route between Haines Junction and Haines, Alaska.

Whitehorse, Carmacks and Faro search and rescue teams along with Yukon EMO donate manpower and equipment to the river race from Whitehorse to Dawson, which is the longest annual canoe and kayak race in the world. The SAR teams provide a much needed safety component

to the race. In September, YARA facilitates race communications for the **Klondike Trail of '98 International Road Relay**, the overnight running relay race between Skagway and Whitehorse.

