



Radio Amateurs of Canada

Youth Education Program

NEWSLETTER

November 1, 2004

The material below was provided by Neil Carleton - VE3NCE - of R. Tait McKenzie Public School in Almonte, ON.

YEP SCHOOLS LAUNCH NATIONAL ECO-PALS PROGRAM via AMATEUR RADIO

Two YEP schools in Alberta and Ontario recently launched their participation in the national Eco-Pals Program with a special class-to-class IRLP amateur radio contact. This special event took place on Wednesday, October 20, at 10:45 a.m. Eastern, 8:45 a.m. Mountain, in the grade 6 classrooms of Brian Jackson, VE6JBJ, at Chestermere Lake Middle School, in Chestermere, Alberta (east of Calgary), and Neil Carleton, VE3NCE, at R. Tait McKenzie Public School, in Almonte, Ontario (west of Ottawa).

The two schools are partners in the national Eco-Pals Program of The Green Group during the 2004-2005 school year. Eco-Pals is a pen-pal program with an environmental theme, available to grade K-9 classes across Canada. Up to 500 classes are matched each September across the country. All participating classes exchange information through the mail with their assigned pals about their local community and environmental issues. Each class communicates with a matched class somewhere in Canada at least three times during the school year, with specific assignments and deadlines on environmental themes. Participating classes receive letters, audio or video tapes, artwork, creative writing, and much more from their pals. Further details about Eco-Pals are available on The Green Group's web site, at <http://www.green-group.com>

As participating teachers in the Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC) national Youth Education Program (YEP), Brian and Neil are using amateur radio at school to extend their involvement in the Eco-Pals Program. As well as exchanging information through the mail this school year, the grade 6 students in room 1009 at Chestermere, and room 22 in Almonte, will be communicating on air with each other across two time zones about environmental issues in their communities.

The special school-to-school IRLP contact was a great success on October 20 to launch the participation of both schools in the Eco-Pals Program. Once the teachers had established radio contact, they turned the microphones over to their principals. Speaking from Almonte, Ontario, was Joanne Clayton, Principal at R. Tait McKenzie Public School. In Chestermere, Alberta, Kim McKenzie, Principal, Chestermere Lake Middle School, was at the microphone. After the Principals exchanged greetings from their schools, to the participating students and attending guests two time zones away, two students from each class spoke about the large Class-To-Class parcel that had arrived in the mail a few days before from the other school.

Following the excitement of the special IRLP contact, the students and teachers devoted a good portion of their morning schedule to opening the exchange parcel and studying the treasures within. Inside were maps, photos, artwork and other creative projects the students made and assembled to showcase their class, school and community.

This special IRLP contact between schools in Almonte and Chestermere was a first in Canada. It was a first for school Principals to exchange greetings across the country by amateur radio from classrooms in their schools. It was also the first time that two participating schools in the national Eco-Pals Program have used amateur radio to launch their partnership.

Now that the first Eco-Pals project is well underway, the participating teachers are busy with their classes to set up a regular schedule of amateur radio contacts. Over the school year, the students will be communicating on air from their classrooms about environmental issues in their part of the country. In the meantime, each class is developing a large bulletin board display of the 28 projects that arrived in the mail. As they learn about the similarities and differences of another community and grade 6 class in Canada, the students will also be studying the environmental challenges of their own community. This environmental connection between schools two time zones away is a working example of how amateur radio in the classroom can be an innovative way of learning, and a great way to make connections across the curriculum.

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Grade 6 Classroom Teacher, Room 22
Participating Teacher, Radio Amateurs of Canada Youth Education Program
Participating Teacher, The Green Group Eco-Pals Program
Supervising Teacher, Shortwave Listening and Amateur Radio Club
Coordinator, School Recycle Program
Coordinator, School Milk Program
Coordinator, Schoolyard Greening
Coach, Junior Boys Soccer Team
School Contact, Global Education

What is your school doing through the Youth Education Program? Please let me know, so that we can share it with everyone in the program.

Bj. Madsen - VE5FX
RAC MidWest Regional Director
Chairman, RAC Youth Education Program