

Newsbriefs

Amateur radio enthusiasts in 24-hour marathon

The Peel Amateur Radio Club (PARC) will be competing against more than 30,000 amateur radio enthusiasts across Canada and the U.S. in the annual 24 hour Field Day Communications Marathon.

The public is invited to watch the event, which will start at 2 p.m. on Saturday at Ogada Wilderness Centre on the north end of Heart Lake Conservation Area. The entrance is off Mayfield Rd., east of Kennedy Rd.

"If people come out, there's a good chance you can listen in the tents to what's going on, and there's a good chance the radio operator will give them a chance to use the radio," said Ernest Nemeth of PARC.

The day will have a picnic-type atmosphere, he said.

"Come with your family. This could be the opening to a completely new activity," he said.

The aim of the marathon is to make as many different radio contacts as possible within 24 hours in a simulated emergency test. Portable radio stations will be set up in open areas using emergency power and points are gained for the number of contacts made.

To simulate emergency scenarios, rules require the stations be set up in abnormal conditions.

For three years in a row, the PARC has placed first in Canada and third among Canadian and U.S. entrants in its category.

Amateur radio operators have learned the value of practice exercises in dealing with crises such as the Quebec ice storm, the Swiss Air crash and other natural disasters — anytime telephone and radio systems are damaged, destroyed or overloaded.

PARC has an active role in Brampton's security net and official emergency plan.

Refreshments and a guided tour of the Field Day activities will be available upon registration at the hospitality tent.