

SVARC Monthly Newsletter

January 2020

Seaway Valley Amateur Radio Club

Next Club Meeting: Wednesday 27 November, 2019

Where: *St. John Ambulance Head Quarters, 1001 Sydney St.—Unit #2 (Sydney St. between 10th and 11th St., across from Your Independent Grocer rear truck entrance on Sydney St. Use the front door marked “Training Entrance”. This is the north end of the Cornwall Electric office building.)*

Time: **07:00 PM** (coffee at 6:30pm)

Guest Speaker: TBD

Weekly SVARC VHF/UHF net:

Monday on VE3SVC (147.180+ MHz; CTCSS 110.9 Hz.) at 7:00 PM local time, followed by a 70CM net on VE3PGC (443.650+ MHz. CTCSS 110.9 Hz.)

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE - Larry Giguere (VA3RSQ)

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From the Editor - Steve Harvey (VE3EZB)



World Radio Day—13 Feb 2020 <https://observances.global/world-radio-day/>

In 2011, the Spanish Radio Academy proposed to UNESCO that there be a “World Radio Day”. 13 February has since been adopted as that day, with the date chosen because it is the day in 1946 that United Nations Radio was established.

Radio is more than a century old now and has become entrenched in many cultures as a traditional means of social interaction and of education. It has also long played an important role in disaster relief and emergency response.

World Radio Day is the occasion for an annual theme that focuses on something good that radio does for societies and for humanity. Some local radio stations across the world focus on that theme, and there are various events held to celebrate and promote the value of radio communication throughout the world.



“CQ DX CQ DX CQ DX PSE DX”

I call and call ‘CQ DX’ with nary a response

Once March has past and conditions drop

It’s time to lay another 50 radials on top

A few days ago one of the local QRPers was up the hill, both enlightened with the prospect of the spring season, and at the same time disillusioned at the prospect of poorer conditions now that we had passed the spring equinox. “I’ve come to ask your advice, to draw upon your experience as a true blue DXer, and I’m sure you can help me.”

We were warmed by his words, but still a bit cautious. Many times we had started a discussion with one of the QRPers on a friendly note, only to find it ended on rather harsh terms if he didn’t agree with us. For while we are always willing to give our best advice, Locals often come with pre-answered questions.

“Tell me”, he said, grasping our hand firmly and staring at us with his beady little eyes, “What’s the deal with DXers? We start out being amazed with the ability to talk to other amateurs all over the world, and within a short time we only worry about our DXCC totals. Fellows I’ve met at Dayton, and even at the local DX club, transform from really nice guys to ogres on the air. They tramp all over everyone, police the DX frequencies, join DX nets or blast those that do! And then when they come back to the clubs, they are their normal selves. Sure, they wear little badges with their DXCC totals, and some even have an Honor Roll pin stuck on their hats, but they are back to their normal Elmer-like personalities. It doesn’t make sense.”

Although we’re sure we had the answer, we did not try to respond to the question straight out. “You have to understand,” we replied, “that there is no pleasure in life as great as DXing. Absolutely nothing. And once the initial glow of working a hundred countries or so has worn off; once the magic of hearing someone in Europe or Asia come back to your CQ call is normal, DXing becomes war! It is your nearness to DXCC #1 Honor Roll that counts. And the closer you get, the more importance one places on one’s standings. While it may be all robins and roses at the DX club, or even at Dayton, beating out W3LPL or even VE1DX on the air is all that matters. Understand?”

“Yes, I think I understand,” he replied slowly, finally letting go of our hand and walking back toward the end of the veranda, “but why such vehemence on the air? Is one country more or less that important? Or for that matter, those that have almost all of them worked seem to be even worse, bellowing for hours just for a band country or to get on a list to work a new prefix!” He took a deep breath, and diverted for a moment. “And speaking of lists, don’t you despise them? Why would any self respecting DXer be caught on a list?”

We held up our hand and cut him off, “The topic of lists has been a sore point ever since the Golden Days of DXing began, and maybe eons before. If lists irritate you, avoid them. If they help you, use them with a clean conscience. Now, back to the question of why true blue DXers seeming unruly and aggressive on the air, OK?”

The QRPer was happy to drop the list question and get back on topic. “Ok, lists or no lists, what is the answer?” We took a short moment to consider this for we were starting to think we’d answered a day’s quota of questions. How does one explain such things to one who may not be ready to understand? We relented and replied with a single word: “Posterity.” He blinked, shook his head and parroted back at us “Posterity?”

Past the Equinox (Continued)— by Paul VE1DX {<https://www.ve1dx.net/Stories/story009.html>}

“Yes! Posterity! Think about it. In 20, 30 or at most 50 years we’ll all be silent keys. And what will we leave behind? The usual materialistic things like money, real estate and maybe a rig and a tower. But our DXCC totals are what are important! When true blue DXers get on the air, they believe their legacy will live on . . . and of what they will be remembered for. Their DXCC totals, of course!” We were thinking we had laid things out and had headed the Local in the right direction, but there was this blank stare on his face.

“Huh?” the QRPer recovered and sputtered out. “What good are DXCC totals to a silent key?” We took a deep breath and replied, knowing QRPers are never satisfied with a simple answer. “Son, it’s one of the Mysteries of DXing, one of the Eternal Enigmas of the Ages. DXers believe they will be remembered for their DXCC totals and nothing else. Word has it that VE1DX has a headstone already with ‘DXCC totals XXX countries’ chiselled on it. And when he finally becomes a silent key, he has instructed his executors to have the XXX replaced with 340 or 350 or whatever his total is at the time.”

“But who goes through cemeteries looking at headstones for DXCC totals?” the QRPer asked slowly. “Who keeps track of your DXCC totals once you’re dead?”

We looked at him intently and responded with two words: “No one.” We were going to leave it at that, but then we added, “And no one keeps track of your DXCC totals while you’re alive, either, except yourself.” The QRPer thought about this for a moment and then asked, “I can’t argue with that, but why do the Big Guns still keep bellowing to get just one more?”

We shrugged and replied: “Who knows? Maybe they know something we don’t.” The QRPer looked at us and he began to shuffle off down the hill. It wasn’t clear if we’d answered the question, but we’d given him something to ponder. Pondering is good for QRPers.

Maybe we were even considering our own position on the matter . . . until we noticed a 160 metre spot for Alaska on the cluster! The heck with posterity or anything else! DX IS! And KL7 on top band didn’t come around very often. We tuned for smoke and began sending our call. It would be a new one! There will always be those Eternal Enigmas known only to the Deserving, and if we attempted to bring up yet another abstract DX concept, it would be bound to revive confusion. So we simply hit the key with our call once again, waiting and knowing that sooner or later the KL7 would hear us.

World Amateur Radio Day—18 April 2020 {<http://www.iaru.org/world-amateur-radio-day.html>}

Every April 18, radio amateurs worldwide take to the airwaves in celebration of World Amateur Radio Day. It was on this day in 1925 that the International Amateur Radio Union was formed in Paris.

Amateur Radio experimenters were the first to discover that the short wave spectrum — far from being a wasteland — could support worldwide propagation. In the rush to use these shorter wavelengths, Amateur Radio was “in grave danger of being pushed aside,” the IARU’s history has noted. Amateur Radio pioneers met in Paris in 1925 and created the IARU to support Amateur Radio worldwide.

Today, Amateur Radio is more popular than ever, with more than 3,000,000 licensed operators!

World Amateur Radio Day is the day when IARU Member-Societies can show our capabilities to the public and enjoy global friendship with other Amateurs worldwide.

Goin on Down the Road — by Art Horovitch (VE3AIH/W4)

Day before US Thanksgiving and Black Friday.

We are now in the Blue Ridge mountains of Virginia. It's a beautiful area and we've enjoyed some great hikes here. We're stopped for a few days in Lynchburg, where we are exploring the town's bike trail called the James River Heritage trail. Walked six miles yesterday and will take our bikes today to go further. We crossed under a bridge with supporting girders looking like they are made of ladder line, very unusual. I found information on the local radio nets here in the area. Again, there are numerous ones. The main frequency is 147.195 + T136.5.

At 9AM there is the Good Morning net, Monday to Friday at 9 AM, sometimes it is called the ROC net (Real Old Codgers). I had trouble checking into that until I realized I had not set the offset to +. I was able to get in, but by then the net was finished. I did notice a lot of noise on the return signal. So I got out the spare 1/4 wave mag mount antenna we have and tried that. What to use for a ground plane? I looked around and spotted the toaster at the edge of the counter. It made the perfect base and my return signal was much stronger. Later, as we were driving into town, I contacted Ron, KK4RWB, who said he a codeplug for Lynchburg and would send it to me by e-mail. So now I could get on DMR as well. Later in the evening, at 8:15 every night except Thursday, there is the mid-state traffic net. On Thursday, there is an ARES net on the same frequency. Again, it's an informal net to check out radios and hear announcements. I was welcomed to the area and became the subject of some controversy about how I was announcing my call as VE3AIH/W4. One fellow said, no, according to international regulations, I should have the W4 first before my call sign. OK, I have heard Europeans who come to America or another country do that, but I've been putting the location designator always at the end for many years since I started coming to the States way back in the 1960's. Maybe I have to start doing it in reverse. Then, near the end of the net, another fellow chimes in and says, No, Art you are right. He has read the regulations carefully and it says Canada and US have a reciprocal agreement which does indeed allow you to put the /W4 at the end. These are the only two countries for which this can be done. Come on, now fellows, no need to argue over this humble Canadian.

In the evening, I tried a repeater on 146.685 -T100, located on Apple Hill, one of the higher peaks in the Blue Ridge mountains at 4,000 feet. It was very easy to access just with the rubber duck antenna. Apparently they have a net there as well on DMR Wednesday nights, but I missed that one.

Later I installed the DMR codeplug and had a chat with several fellows on that mode as well. So it's been interesting getting to chat with the locals. They are always courteous and very welcoming. The tradition of Southern hospitality lives on.



Art found a "Ladder-line" bridge.

Nov 28

Ron, KK4RWB advised me that "Buy Two Way radios.com" had a sale of the UV-380 DMR radio for Black Friday. It's the dual band version of my Tytera MD-380. For \$80 and free shipping it was too good an offer to pass up. So I ordered one. It will have to be shipped to my daughter in Richmond and she will forward it to me when we are in Knoxville, TN.

Dec 1

The 40 meter band seems to be picking up. I broke a pile-up from F5MUX in France. He told everyone to stand by till he got my call correct, then we exchanged signal reports. After that, I had a long QSO with a ham in Georgia south of Atlanta. We were going at 30 WPM, back and forth just as if we were having a normal conversation, but all in CW. He invited us to drop by his house, but he is a bit too far off our projected path. Maybe another time.



Goin on Down the Road *(Continued)* — by Art Horovitch (VE3AIH)

Another chat with KK4WRB on the local net and he advised me that there is a Tytera DMR radio similar to mine, but it includes both VHF and UHF. It is a UV-380. Being as it is Black Friday weekend, the seller reduced the price to \$79.95 and no shipping cost. Pretty hard to beat that. My MD-380 is getting a bit long in the tooth, so this will be a new one to play with. Apparently I cannot just transfer over the codeplugs I have from the MD-380, but there is a special program to easily convert a codeplug from one radio to another, called DMR Contact Manager. It's available for a small donation. It appears quite easy to use: set up a blank codeplug, then call up the existing codeplug and copy it into the blank one. All the data gets transferred over to the new codeplug, then you can download it into the new radio.

Dec 3

I found out about a local net and was on it tonight at 8:30, W4CA repeater on 146.985, T107.2. It's very informal, just to chat about what is going locally and who is working on what radio or antenna projects. After calling for mobile or portable stations, the NCS asks for check-ins by alphabetical ranges, A-H, H-Q, etc. It makes for very orderly check-ins. Too bad we won't be here longer, as there is a DMR net tomorrow night and the club meeting next Monday, always the second Monday of the month. As usual, I was welcomed to the area and was asked what brings me here. After explaining we are snowbirds on our way to Alabama and Florida, they wished us a pleasant trip and to be careful on the I-81, as it can be a dangerous road with so many tractor trailers.

Dec 10

I finally picked up the new radio today and used a codeplug from my friend in Lynchburg. It is very extensive, covering all of Virginia, the Carolinas, parts of Tennessee, West Virginia and Georgia. I programmed it in and went to Knoxville zone, which I was pleased to see had Channel 91, Worldwide.

The next morning at 6 AM I heard two Australians, then worked a station in Seoul, South Korea. I just missed a station in Gibraltar. Later in the day, I worked all over the US, from California to Maryland and Ohio.

In my contacts, I came across a "newbie" who had only been a ham for a few weeks. His call was K3OL? The last letter sounded like B or T. I asked him for the phonetic for the last letter, but he couldn't remember it. Another station came on and said "P-Papa". The newbie came back and said he was still learning the international phonetic alphabet as used by airlines and radio amateurs. When I asked for his QTH, he said "What's that?" So this guy has some learning to do. But no matter, we all started at the same stage in our ham career. I just wanted to make him feel welcome to the fraternity.

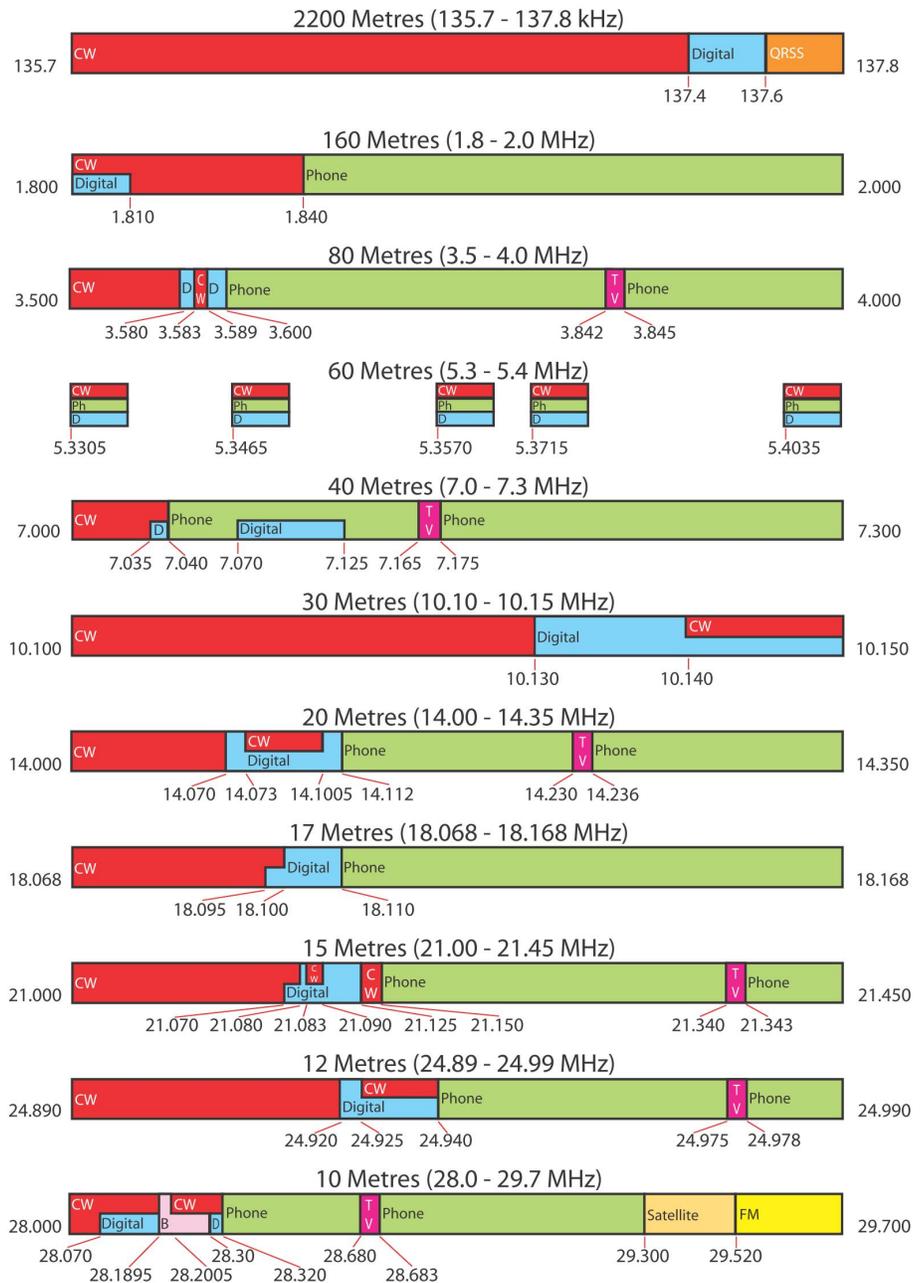


Canadian 0 - 30MHz Band Plan

Effective Date:
December 1, 2015

1. This is a simplified version of the official RAC Band Plan. Not all permissible modes/activities are represented.
2. LSB is used on 160, 80 and 40m. USB is used on all other bands that permit SSB, including 60m.
3. Consult various online resources for detailed information on what digital modes are used.
4. Maximum bandwidth permitted on 2200m is 100 Hz. Maximum power is 1 Watt EIRP.
5. Refer to the IC and RAC websites for full details before operating on the new 60m channels.
6. Remember not to allow your signal to spill over into adjoining band segments when operating close to the edges. During major weekend contests, activity in certain modes can spill over into other segments. Operators should avoid NCDXF beacons on 14.100, 18.110, 21.150, 24.930 and 28.200 MHz.
7. This graphic is a living document and will be reviewed and updated periodically to reflect changes in the band plans and operating habits.

www.rac.ca



Key		
■ CW	CW	■ FM
■ QR	CW QRSS	■ D
■ Ph	Phone	■ T
■ B	Beacons	■ S
■ V	SSTV	■ Satellite

Is CW a Digital Mode? — by Paul VE1DX {<https://www.ve1dx.net/Stories/story010.html>}

One of the Local QRPers was down in the village the other day, pacing back and forth in the park, with a troubled look on his face and sweat on his brow. After about fifteen minutes of this he started up the hill, working his way closer as he kept pacing. He finally made it to the verandah. We had the feeling he wanted advice, but was afraid to ask. So, against our better judgment, we asked the QRPer what was troubling him. "Oh", he replied slowly, "I'm just thinking about how I can forget CW"

Usually there isn't a lot a QRPer can say that leaves us speechless, but this one did! We had heard a lot of strange theories and creative interpretations of the Eternal Enigmas of DXing from the Local QRPers, but this was something we hadn't expected. We just looked at the QRPer as he ploughed on.

"I can't get it out of my head!" he continued, stopping and looking us right in the eye, "I catch myself looking at road signs, books or anything else that contains text and unconsciously translating it to dits and dahs. When I turn on the rig, I automatically spin the dial to the lower band edge. I can't leave it alone. How am I going to forget it if I can't stay away from it? Pretty soon I won't be a true blue DXer at all!"

We regained our composure and looked at the QRPer intently. "Aren't those the very techniques you used ten years ago to learn the code? And didn't you spend endless hours getting your speed up to where you could operate with the best of them? Why would you want to un-do all that hard work? Aren't you a good CW operator?"

"Yes! Right on all counts. I listened to you! I listened to all the Big Guns and the ARRL. I worked and worked at it until I could send and receive 25-30 WPM. And now I'm cursed with it. I can't get it out of my head!"

"Why would you want to?" we asked, incredulously. In all our years as a DXer, we'd heard the opposite argument thousands of times . . . but we'd never heard anything like this before. "Why? Why, you ask! So I can become a true blue modern DXer! The new operators, the ones with the FT-1000's and full bore amplifiers who've been Extras for three or four months are telling me CW QSOs are not real DX! Most of them say unless you hear the other person's voice, it isn't a good contact! They claim I'm stuck in the last millennium, and that a bunch of dots and dashes don't count."

"That's ridiculous!" we roared, jumping to our feet. "Why are you listening to that foolishness? Is there anything in the DXCC rules that have changed regarding CW contacts? CW contacts are just as good as phone! Maybe even a heck of a lot better!"

"Not according to the new guys. They said a real contact has to be made on phone. I said the ARRL and the DXCC desk don't specify anything like that! They laughed at me, and said I should get with the new wave of operators and stop listening to the old has-beens. They said the FCC was moving to do away with CW altogether, and within a few years it'll be just a memory, like spark transmissions."

He looked at us with a worried face and continued, "So if I don't concentrate on SSB, and learn how to become better at busting pileups who are listening 200-220, I won't be able to compete with these new generation of True Blue DXers. I have to learn how to get on DX lists, and all the tricks involved in making sure the Net Controller hears my last two. I can't split my attention between CW and phone and remain competitive. I have to forget the code!" He was sweating and his beady little eyes were glaring right at us. "Being a good CW operator has become a curse!"

"You are over reacting," we said, sitting back down. "CW will never die." The QRPer was not convinced. "I told them that, and they said maybe not, but only computer sent and received code should be allowed. They said that CW is like PSK-31, whatever that is. They said hand sent code could never be as perfect as code sent by a computer, and that a real 21st century DXer will use computer technology to send everything. Why, they even claim that SSB isn't real unless it's DSP processed on send and receive!"

Is CW a Digital Mode? (Continued)— by Paul VE1DX {<https://www.ve1dx.net/Stories/story010.html>}

"Don't be so silly" we replied. "CW will always be around, and no computer can decode it better than the human ear. Besides, it isn't a digital mode."

"But they say it is! The new DXers say they can send and receive 50-60 WPM with their TNCs the same as RTTY, Packet and ASCII, and that the dits and dahs are the same as ones and zeros. They say it's a digital mode. These guys all have 1.3 and 1.5 GHz CPUs in their computers too! They keep claiming to be the wave of the future, and say we better listen to them."

"Who cares what they say? The ARRL will protect the interests of us traditional DXers and real CW types. Why do you think they have Straight Key Night? Don't let a few new comers with fast computers tell you the DXCC program is going digital, or that you have to forget CW! They are just pulling your leg. It sounds like they are new members of the Legion of Hand Wringers."

The QRPer drew himself up to his full five foot five and a half inches tall and looked directly in the eye. "That's exactly what I told them. And do you know what they said? They asked me one simple question. 'Who's paying the bills?' At first I didn't follow them. And then it hit me! All the Old Timers are either life members in the ARRL or have dropped out because of the increased fees of the DXCC program. The new kids with their fast computers are the only ones joining the ARRL. They are generating the new revenue. And it follows they will call the shots! So whatever you and I might have learned and believed years ago has all changed. If the due paying members say SSB only, or that CW is a computerized digital mode, we better listen! And you better forget your code too!"

Son of a Gun! We sputtered for an answer, but there was none forthcoming. Usually when a QRPer goes on a ridiculous tangent, we can see the mistake. This time, we couldn't see a flaw in his reasoning. We scratched our head as he walked down the hill and thought about what he had said. The more we thought about it, the more our brain muscles ached.

Finally we shrugged and started off toward Palos Verdes country. By everyone's measure, this cycle hadn't met expectations. There was DX, but the bands were not as hot as they were during the Golden Days of DXing of past cycles. We decided that even if the QRPer and his computers friend were right, we still needed propagation. Maybe the leader of the Palos Verdes Sundancers could explain things. DX IS! Even if it has to be digital. Remember what Lord Baden Powell, the Hero of Mafeking so often advised: "Be prepared!" Even if it means buying a 1.3 GHz Pentium IV to work CW for you . . .



Seaway Valley Amateur Radio Club

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www.svarc.ca

The Seaway Valley Amateur Radio Club operates a number of repeaters in Cornwall and Area. VE3SVC is a VHF Yaesu Fusion digital repeater operating on both analog and C4FM modes at 147.180 + and a tone of 110.9 Hz. On UHF, VE3PGC (previously VE3MTA), also a Yaesu Fusion repeater with wide area coverage, is located at Bonville. It operates at 443.650 + and a tone of 110.9 Hz. For other repeaters see the Repeater Page.

SVARC Executive 2020—2021

- **President:** Larry Giguere (VA3RSQ)
- **Vice President:** Doug Pearson (VE3HTR)
- **Secretary:** Chris Lauzon (VA3CRR)
- **Treasurer:** Elizabeth Halliwell (VE3EZH)
- **Technical Consultant:** Doug Pearson
- **Club Membership:** Elizabeth Halliwell
- **Net Manager:** Tom Todd (VA3KD)
- **ARES Coordinator:** Earle DePass (VE3IMP)
- **Editor/Publisher:** Steve Harvey (VE3EZB)



Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES)

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) is composed of certified Radio Amateurs who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment for communications duty in the public service when disaster strikes.

Upcoming Events



The Seaway Valley Amateur Radio Club is a proud Radio Amateurs of Canada Affiliated Club.



The SVARC Repeater reports are now available on the club website under "Area Repeater List"