

SVARC Monthly Newsletter

February 2020

Seaway Valley Amateur Radio Club

Next Club Meeting: Wednesday 26 February, 2020

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)

I am sorry I didn't get the last minutes from November and the presidents letter out in time before the January meeting. Both will be sent to you so you can look them over and let us know if there are any errors. I will not be there for the February meeting as I will be on a well deserved vacation. Doug Pearson VE3HTR will be sitting in for me.

I have been trying to set up an amateur radio course for our area. We have had several people ask about it and I would like to put an ad in the local paper once we have decided a date to try and get more applicants. So far Murray VE3XLJ, Dave VE3HLU, Ed VE3EAH, Larry VA3RSQ, Roger VA3GBV and Earle VE3IMP have shown an interest in helping out. We could use a few more. If you are interested in helping out, please contact me. Hopefully we will be able to run the course sometime in April or May. It is always nice to see new people wanting to get into amateur radio and I hope we can help them get involved with the hobby.

The Raisin River Canoe Race is tentative for April 19 and we will be looking for volunteers to help out. Please keep this on your agenda. See you at the March meeting.

73—Larry (VA3RSQ)

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From the Editor - Steve Harvey (VE3EZB)

Three strikes and you're out!

As I sit here trying to come up with something to write, I'm tuning around the bands. I come across some "real hams" "educating" some "new hams" and "no coders". Now, I'm not one to mince words so I will be direct and call these "real hams" what they are— "Crusty Old Elitists" or "COEs" for short. You know the type—the ones who have had to study "real hard" and "actually know something" before getting a license. Things such as 12wpm CW (or better); things such as having to operate a full year on CW before being able to actually talk on the radio; things such as having to memorize several types of circuits and recalling those circuits at a moments notice; things such as having to build all their own gear because they couldn't afford to buy it, blah, blah, blah. These "COEs" seem to take great pleasure in bullying and belittling the "new hams" and "no coders" and unequivocally say that "new hams" and "no coders" have no place on the bands and should give up their licenses. The "COEs" are telling the "new hams" and "no coders" that their achievements means nothing because it was just to easy to get licensed. STRIKE ONE!

Of course this does not apply to all hams who had to go through the "tough times". It was difficult for you I'm sure, but that does not give you give you the right to dismiss someone else's efforts in earning theirs. Just remember, before you press the PTT and rant about the new guys, that many of the "new hams" and "no coders" are listening and you may be discouraging them from enjoying the hobby ... the same hobby that you are so passionate about. I suspect that many "old-timers" who were on the air when you were first licensed felt the same way about you. Try not to ruin it for them.

Tuning up the band, I come across a few old guys having a QSO so I listen in. The usual bashing of the President, some discussion about the weather and how climate change was ruining the world but eventually the conversation turned to health problems. One OM was describing the procedure he had recently ... in detail. He was describing how the Dr had (and I'll keep it clean here) inserted a digit into an area normal used as an output ... dial spin. I'll try another band.

Soon I find another QSO. Here, one OM was describing his recent bowel movements ... dial spun again. Why do some folks think that that anyone gives a crap (pardon the pun) about the intricate details of their particular illness or situation? Just say that you are ill and leave it at that. STRIKE TWO!

Ok. I still don't know what I'm going to write in the newsletter. Turn up and down the band hoping to find something that will tweak my interest or at least provide me with an idea on what to write. I happen across a QSO where some COEs were whining about digital modes. "FT8 sucks! It's ruining the HF bands", one OM says. "... and don't get me started about PSK-31!" says another. Another genius jumps in and declares "there should not be any digital modes on the HF bands—only RTTY and CW should be allowed." Now at this point, someone speaks up (perhaps a "new ham" or maybe he was a "no coder" sounded young) and says "... RTTY and CW are digital modes too." It took about 10 seconds before I think anyone realized what had just happened ... then the swearing and belittling began. My only regret here was that the younger sounding ham beat me to it. STRIKE THREE!

As I headed back to the proverbial dugout, head hung low, wondering what to write it hit me. I could speak about what I had just heard on the air today. Smile and Cruise!

Don't be a COE or a Lid.

73—Steve (VE3EZB)

Editors Note: The events described above happened over a few days. For the purpose of this article, I've combined them into "one day". Any resemblance to persons real or fictitious are purely coincidental.

Meeting Agenda — General (Monthly) Meeting—Wednesday 26 February 2020

06:30 PM Soft drinks and socializing

07:00 PM Meeting starts

Business Arising:

Minutes of last meeting (January 29 2002) – Ed VE3EAH

Treasurers Report – Elizabeth (VE3EZH)

Net Controllers Report – Tom (VA3KD)

Newsletter Report – Steve (VE3EZB)

Miscellaneous Reports

Repeater Report - Doug (VE3HTR)

Web Report – Ed (VE3EAH)

RAC Insurance and Affiliation Forms

50/50 Draw and Door Prizes.

New Business:

Discussion on Amateur Radio Course (instructors)

Children hospital event. Ed update

Presentation:

TBA

Upcoming Events:

- Iroquois Flea Market April 4 2020
- Raisin River Canoe Race April 19 2002
- Smith Falls Flea Market May 9 2020

Field Day June 27/28 2020

Adjournment:

Date, time and place of next meeting: Wednesday, February 26, 2020 at 07:00 PM, St. John Ambulance HQ

Please note this location maybe changing Will notify everyone if this happens

Last week one of the Local QRPers was up the hill to try some questions on us. This one was upset not because of countries worked, or of countries missed, but of deeper things. "When will I be considered a True Blue DXer? I've been licensed for almost a dozen years now, and I've worked a lot of DX. And still, I don't feel I get the respect of the Big Guns. Those guys who've been around for two or three cycles . . . and one is even on his fourth cycle. They don't pay much attention to my ideas or even listen to some suggestions I have. How long will it be before I become a Big Gun DXer?"

This was not the first time we'd heard this question, and it probably wouldn't be the last. We tried the usual answer: "You don't measure a DXer's prowess in years", we said, looking him straight in the eye. "Your measure of DX stature is a measure of your understanding of the Mysteries of the Ages and being able to grasp the meaning of the Eternal Enigmas of DXing. And most of all, accepting that DX IS!"

"I've heard all that a dozen times!" he spouted, looking back at us and glaring with his beady little eyes. "That's how you always answer my questions. With this philosophical stuff that no one understands. Never mind Eternal Enigmas or that sort of double talk. Why can't you give me some concrete answers to a simple question? When will I be considered a True Blue DXer?"

We thought about this for a moment. How does one explain such things to one who is not ready to understand? We took a deep breath and gave it a shot. "To become a True Blue DXer, you have to believe. You have to believe that DXers are smarter, taller, better looking and generally a cut above the average amateur. You have to believe that the Mysteries of the Ages and the Eternal Enigmas of DXing are what they appear, and not question them. Once you are a believer, you will become one of the Deserving, and only the Deserving are True Blue DXers. Surely you can understand this. Just be a believer!"

The QRPer didn't understand. He stared at us for a moment and then asked with a puzzled look on his face: "Believe what? I don't even know what any of those things are. How can I believe something when I don't even know what it is? What is an Eternal Enigma? I need examples!"

It was clear that the QRPer wasn't going to accept our explanation, so we decided to give him the details he wanted. "Do you know what long path is? And do you know what short path is?" we asked. "Of course I do!" the QRPer retorted. "That's one of the first things you learn when you get a directional antenna." We looked him squarely in the eye and said, "Remember when Romeo activated Burma? Back in 1991? Did you work him long path or short path?" The QRPer looked at us with a confused face and then answered, "How should I know? That was ten years ago. What difference does it make? I have two XY0RR QSLs, and the DXCC desk counted them. So what difference does it make if I worked him long path or short path?"

We looked at him with a satisfied smile. "The Big Guns you say do not give you much credibility; they worked him too. We all did. We worked him beaming 270 degrees. And we believed he was there. So did the DXCC desk. The difference is we remembered the beam heading. But we didn't question it because we were believers."

"How could he be in Burma if you worked him beaming 270?" the QRPer asked? We just smiled and replied, "Because he was. We are believers. The unusual path was one of the Eternal Enigmas of DXing."

The QRPer scratched his head and looked at us with even more confusion than before. "Look" he said, "all I asked was when will I become a True Blue DXer and you are telling me I have to remember and believe a beam heading that was ten years ago, and that it was 90 degrees off of where it should have been. What does that have to do with gaining the respect of the Big Guns?"

It was obvious we'd missed our pitch, so we tried a different angle. "If you called directional CQ DX for a rare one, something that you really needed, say a P5, and you got an answer, would you believe it was the real thing. Let's say you called for a half an hour and finally a P5AAA responded with a '5NN QSL VIA BOX 2653 PYONGYANG' when you let off the keyer. Would you believe you had nailed a real P5?"

"Of course not! No True Blue DXer calls CQ anyhow. And if I did, I sure wouldn't send off for a card to some Slim like that! What has this got to do with my question?"

We continued on. "But suppose that you did send for the card, and you really did get one back. And assume even further that you sent it in to the ARRL and they counted it. Would you then believe you had worked a P5?"

The QRPer looked at us for a moment, deep in thought. "Well, if all that happened, I guess I would believe it. If the league said it was a good one, then who would I be to question it. But that never would happen, would it?" He thought for a moment longer and then said, "But maybe it could happen", he said slowly, answering his own question. "So what you are telling me is that as long as I believe the DX is real, then I will become a True Blue DXer and the Big Guns will respect me. That the true meaning of DX IS! is believing everything I work on the bands is legitimate?"

We decided this was a lost cause, so we simply said, "Something like that, although not quite so simplistic. Maybe you need to work on it for a little longer."

The QRPer started down the hill and then turned and said, "No, I don't think I do. I am starting to understand. All I needed was a couple of examples. I was making the assumption that DX IS! only when there is ironclad proof. The answer is quite simple when I think about it. Simply put, it can be expressed mathematically as $DX\ MAYBE! + BELIEVING = DX\ IS!$ And once you understand DX IS!, you are a True Blue DXer!" His face brightened, and he picked up the pace toward the village.

We watched him go and slowly shook our head. Enlightenment comes to some quicker than others, and even Albert never figured it all out. This particular QRPer had potential, but today he was beaming into solid rock! Son of a Gun! What he didn't understand was the enlightenment would come only when he would stop worrying about whether or not other DXers appreciated his sterling qualities.

DX IS! Believe this without the MAYBE and you will become one of the Deserving. When that day comes, you'll know it. All the Deserving remember their day of DX enlightenment. And only the Deserving will work the DX. Even if it is a single P5AAA QSO from Pyongyang. Listen to the advice of Lord Baden-Powell and be prepared, for North Korea is coming. The question is when!

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

A new year's rant

Happy New year, everyone.
This is the first year of the new decade.

So along with New Year's resolutions, there is hope for better conditions on the HF bands with the sunspot cycle near the minimum and supposedly on the upswing towards the maximum in 2025. A number of "old timers" who got their license in the mid 60's to early 70's have expressed the same level of frustration as I have at how ham radio has changed since they entered the hobby. We don't even recognize it anymore. It's a reflection of our fast-paced society: instant communication, contests, digital QSO's that are practically automatic. It's all about wracking up as many contacts as possible and getting the "certificate" to plaster on the wall of your ham shack. Never mind actually "communicating" with people, which is what ham radio used to be about. It's become so easy to get a license, and you don't even have to understand much anymore. All the questions for the exam are multiple choice and available on-line. Memorization anyone? At one time the license was worth something and you had to struggle to achieve it: Morse Code at 10-15 WPM, being able to draw schematic diagrams of the radios we use for transmitting and receiving, troubleshooting problems and repairing your own radios. Now you can get your license in a "weekend session" with minimal explanation of how things work. Just memorize. Most new hams are "appliance operators" and the radio manufacturers have made the circuitry so complicated that you need thousands of dollars in test equipment to even start to diagnose a problem.

(stepping down off my soapbox)

For the first time since we left Cornwall, I was able to set up my 30ft ground plane. It makes quite a difference compared to the hamstick. I worked a number of stations on both CW and SSB on 40 meters. Then for fun, I mounted the 80m hamstick on the truck and worked a few more. Some DX was coming in, including a YO station from Romania. Typical winter long skip on 80 meters. But you have to put up with the QSB. I called him, but the pile-up was too big, so I was not able to contact him. Guys running a KW and antennas 70 ft high are too much competition for my signal. Anyhow, it was fun to see the bands being more active. Having the generator running, so I can run the full 100 watts helps also. But late in the afternoon, with the trailer batteries fully charged, I was able to make contacts even running just 30 watts.

Jan 1: Straight Key Night

We dig out our old straight keys, bugs and sideswipers. Some of us fire up old rigs with names that the newcomers have never heard of:

Johnson, Heathkit, Drake, Collins, Hallicrafters. The soft glow of the tubes helps to warm up the shack. But tonight it is not to be. Conditions are so bad that I cannot work anyone. For the first time in probably 20 years, my SKN log is empty.

Jan 7

We went hiking on the Florida trail again today starting where it crosses Dead River Road and continuing in the direction of highway 20. We had brought our VHF radios to keep in contact on 146.52 simplex. On the way back, I heard a ham calling from his plane. I could make out "aeronautical mobile", but could not get his call, as he was fading in and out. He was on his way to Charleston, SC. So he may have been quite far from us. He was using only a HT with a rubber duck antenna stuck out the window of the plane. From our experience with aeronautical mobile when we had the plane in Alberta, the engine noise can make it quite difficult to copy signals.

Jan 11

We are under a severe thunderstorm and tornado watch for the afternoon due to a fast moving storm. We are parked at the Moose Lodge in Fort Walton Beach for a few days. We made ready for a possible evacuation of the trailer: put-

Go in Down the Road *(Continued from pg 6)* — by Art Horovitch (VE3AIH)

ting our "go bag" in the truck, as well as packing up some of our ham equipment, removing the hamstick antenna, and scouting out solid structures (stores like Kohl's, Winn-Dixie and Lowe's), where we can take shelter if necessary. The computers are ready to go into the truck at a moment's notice. The weather radio is ready and we are tuned to NPR for updates about the progress of the storm. It is huge, but fast moving, hitting Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and the panhandle of Florida. The storm runs all the way from the Gulf Coast up the Mississippi river and up into the northeast. Surprisingly, there are no VHF or UHF repeaters all along this section of the coast that I can use. By 5 PM, the worst is over, just some rain and a bit of lightning, but it is moving on. We've been through worse.

Jan 16

Staying for a few days in the country at Boondockers Welcome site north of Crestview, FL. I was talking to our neighbours, Taylor and Melinda. He is quite keen on "smart home" technology and has adopted it to his trailer using a Raspberry pi microcomputer. He showed me how he can control everything in his trailer and monitor what is going on using his smart phone... turn on lights, check temp of the fridge, look at cameras on the door, the side and back of the trailer, among other things. He said he was working on other projects involving small circuit boards. But he had forgotten his soldering iron. So I said, I can help with that. After supper, I went over there with my soldering iron and installed "header pins" on two small circuit boards, so that he can connect a cable onto the board. It worked out well after I went back and retrieved my 3.0 reading glasses. Then we checked with a magnifying glass and light to make sure there were no cold solder joints or bridges and it looked good. The space between the pins was about 1 mm, so quite a challenge. He is quite intrigued by ham radio, so I showed him my station, turned on the radio and listened on 40 meters for a few minutes. He also took a couple of my QST magazines and had questions about several articles. Both he and Melinda had uncles who were hams, so he may get into it also. We spent another 15 minutes talking about what ham radio can do, and the many aspects of it. He liked the idea of digital communications, so that would fit in quite nicely with his experience in programming.

Jan 25-26 Winter Field Day. Crawfordville Florida, about 20 miles south of Tallahassee. (Wakulla county)

In the north they call it FYBO or Freeze Your Buns Off. But here it's quite pleasant. Quite a setup they have here. It is the emergency operations center for the Wakulla County Fire Department. The trailer is about 30 ft. long and has a front and back compartment. The larger front compartment has shelves for radios and other equipment, as well as UPS batteries. The back compartment has a large table and comfortable bench seats on both sides. Outside in an enclosed box is a diesel generator. Doug showed us how to start it. Push the button, wait while the fuel pump gets going and it will start in about 5 seconds. Suzan watched and said "I want one like that." Once the generator was started, we tried to get power, but nothing was active. We finally found the breaker panels under the desk and a row of outlets came on near the front. Towards the back of the operating position, there was a UPS, but we couldn't figure out how to turn the power on. Finally we located a tiny slide switch on the top and all the outlets were live.

Meanwhile several people were working on setting up antennas. First was the dipole that Wim had brought, 130 ft long and fed with ladder line. He had made the ladder line himself from plastic spreaders and #14 insulated wire. It took a while to get a center support up, then find a place to tie down the ends, and finally support the ladder line going back to the trailer where it came in via a coax line. Testing it with the antenna analyzer it showed low SWR on both 40 and 20 meters. Then came the big job of assembling and raising the three element beam. It is on a crank-up tower which can be raised to 100 feet. The whole thing is stowed on a trailer and it tilts up into a vertical position by a manual crank. Then after it is secured in place by a large bolt at the front of the trailer, there is a 12 volt motor to raise the tower and beam. We decided raising it about 30 ft would be sufficient. I asked where is the rotor cable? Jeff said we have a rope tied to the boom and we can rotate it that way. Armstrong method, I guess. Since it will be pointed towards the northwest for best coverage, once it is tied down, we won't be turning it anyway.

So by 2 PM we had antennas and radios for 3 stations. I was going to use Doug's FTDX-3000, but could not get it working properly on CW. I could get dashes from my key, but no dots using the internal keyer. I checked and double checked in the manual, followed the directions exactly to set up the internal keyer, but it refused to work.

Goin on Down the Road *(Continued from pg 7)* — by Art Horovitch (VE3AIH)

The connections for the plug are exactly the same as on my Icom 7100 radio. I finally went back and got my trusty Icom 706MK2G and MFJ tuner and was on the air in 10 minutes after adjusting the tuner. After lunch of Suzan's special veggie soup shared with the other hams, I went back and started operating around 4 PM. I made about 16 contacts in an hour, but they were all under my own call. Doug had said we are class 2O, meaning two stations operating outside. There were already two stations operating so I used my own call instead of the club call W4WAK. Discussions with the other operators said it doesn't matter, you can get on anyhow. I don't know how that will work when the logs are submitted and it will be obvious there are more than two stations. We probably should have designated as 4O.

After supper, I got back on and made another 10 contacts in about 20 minutes using the club call as the others had left for supper. Much better results. Later I went in and saw Doug, who adjusted his radio to work on voice, but he said he had never used it on CW, so no luck there. The trailer will be locked up tonight and the key left in a hidden place. There are several computers and several thousand dollars of radio equipment inside, and we wouldn't want anything disappearing. It's right next to the sheriff's main office, but you never know.

Sunday: Jan. 26

(Suzan) It was sunny when we first woke but turned cloudy fairly quickly after. Our solar panels were not charging the way they should so Art went to work on checking that out while I went for a walk.

(Art) The next day: the solar charger in the trailer is not working correctly, so the batteries are not getting any charge from the sun. I decided that rather than spend time with the radios, I needed to check all the connections at the battery posts. But first I removed the controller inside and checked for voltage from the rooftop panels: 24 volts. No problem with the panels or wiring from the roof to the controller. But when I checked the battery it was showing only about 12.5 volts. In the bright sun, it should have been at least 13.5 volts. No indicator lights were showing on the front panel either. Back at the batteries, I started with the top one in the battery compartment, pulling off all the leads and cleaning them with a wire brush to remove greenish and yellow deposits, which most likely is sulphur from the batteries. Then I used steel wool to get them nice and shiny. While I was doing this, I noticed the "hot" line from the solar panels and controller to the batteries had an in-line glass fuse holder, the old style with a screw-on barrel and spring to hold the fuse in place. When I opened it up, what a surprise. The contacts and the ends of the fuse itself were full of that yellow stuff. No wonder I was getting no charging. After cleaning the fuse holder and fuse, I put it all back together again and at least I could now see the charging light come on the controller. We'll have to wait again until we are in full sunlight and not hooked up to AC to see if that cured the problem.

By about 1 PM, I walked down to the trailer, and there were 4 stations set up, two on SSB, one on CW and one using digital FT-8. Not all operational at the same time. Doug was at his radio, so I asked if he could show me how to get it on CW. Well, we both read the manual very carefully and followed the instructions to choose "electronic keyer", but still no luck. My paddle was acting like a bug, only dashes, no dots. I can't send CW that way. Back a few pages in the manual, it said "turn the keyer on". But they didn't tell you where to look to turn it on. Doug finally found it buried in a submenu under the scope controls, and everything worked fine after. By then it was only about 20 minutes before the end of the contest, but I managed to make a few more contacts. Then we had the big job of "take-down" putting away all the gear, cleaning up the trailer and taking down the antennas. By 3 PM we were done. All told there were only about 4 or 5 operators, but another 5 or 6 hams were there to help with setup, socialize and take down at the end. A fun time. Everyone was very friendly and said they were pleased to finally meet me.

Jan 28-29

We fly back to Toronto for one day to renew our 92-day emergency medical insurance. No radios come along, no analog or DMR ht's. I don't want any delays going through customs and security checks.

After breakfast at the hotel, we waited in the lobby before taking the shuttle at 7:20 this morning.

Goin on Down the Road *(Continued from pg 8)* — by Art Horovitch (VE3AIH)

Another couple joined me and we started talking, only to find out that the guy was also a ham radio operator, though it didn't sound like he operates much. He is retired military and said between moving around frequently and being kept busy with his duties, there wasn't much time to put up good antennas and operate. He was originally from PEI and chose the call VE1PIG. Then he moved to Ontario, he chose the call VE3ASS. I'm not sure what's wrong with this guy, but I would never choose calls like that. Besides, I already have experience from my previous call VE2AHH. On CW, if you miss a few dots, it is VE2ASS. Even my present call VE3AIH can be twisted into VE3ASS just by moving one dot from the H to the I. Check it out, all you CW ops!

Strange thing here in the parking lot at the Moose lodge. There were two new RV's yesterday in the boondocking area and now another one pulled into the field. He is here for the Chili cook-off on Sunday at Lake Jackson. I noticed his truck box had a mount for two antennas. One looked like a CB antenna and the other had a ball and spring mount suitable for a large HF antenna. I asked him about them and he said he used to be on CB, but doesn't use it anymore. Now he uses his "yazoo SSB radio" when he goes hunting with his buddies. It took me a few seconds to understand he has a Yaesu HF radio. I don't think Yaesu makes SSB HT's. So I asked him his call sign. He said nonchalantly. Oh, I don't have a call sign. I told him it was illegal for him to transmit without a license, but he just shrugged it off. I'm sure the FCC would be interested in his "Yazoo radio". But I was not going to push it. If I see him again, I will mention that getting a ham license is not that difficult these days. Then he can be legal if he passes the required exams to operate SSB. In Canada, I believe it is illegal to even own a transmitter (transceiver) if you don't have a license. I don't know if there is a similar rule in the US.

Later, he showed me his radio in the truck and it was indeed a VHF (or maybe VHF/UHF) radio.

On the local Sunday night net that I checked into, someone mentioned that he was getting interference from some hunters who were coming in with very strong signals on a 2 meter simplex frequency. They were so loud that they were "splattering" as much as 15 KHz off their transmit frequency. The net control suggested that if they could be located, the sheriff should be called and go out to give them a citation, even quoting the law that makes it illegal to transmit without a license. It's a felony and there could be a fine, confiscation of equipment and even jail time involved if the illegal activity does not stop.

I finally got a codeplug for my new TYT UV-380 DMR radio from one of the locals. He put Brandmeister Worldwide 91 and North America 93 channels on it for me. I downloaded it to the radio and immediately started making contacts. Several in North America and a short contact to Australia. Although it was somewhat spotty due to internet congestion. I heard other stations having problems also. Later I heard a station in Gibraltar, but he was gone before I could contact him. With multiplexing on DMR, sometimes you hear only one side of the conversation. Other times the receive light comes on, and you hear no audio at all. But when it works it is great, very clear.

Feb 2

I volunteer to man a radio checkpoint for the Tallahassee marathon. The NCS uses tactical call signs. I am AO. He also cautions us that since we must identify at least once every 10 minutes, that we sign off our transmission using our call sign. There is also a regular call for each checkpoint to identify with their call, so all the bases are covered. The race goes off without a hitch, no injuries or other emergencies. Lots of college age kids, some middle agers going slower and a few boomers going slower still, but still hanging in.

At some point, several people start throwing down their gloves or headband right at my chair. One woman says she'll be back to pick it up later. I guess starting out, it was cold, but after the first few miles it is heating up. Many said thank you for helping. I guess I looked pretty official with the radio and the ARES vest. When I get back to the trailer, I see someone has thrown an orange wool toque in the back of my truck. I suppose he planned to pick it up later, but by then the truck was gone. I never was able to track down its owner, so I'll have a souvenir. Useful when we are out hiking in colder weather and to let hunters know we are in the area. We usually wear our orange vests as well out in the woods.

(Continued on pg 12)

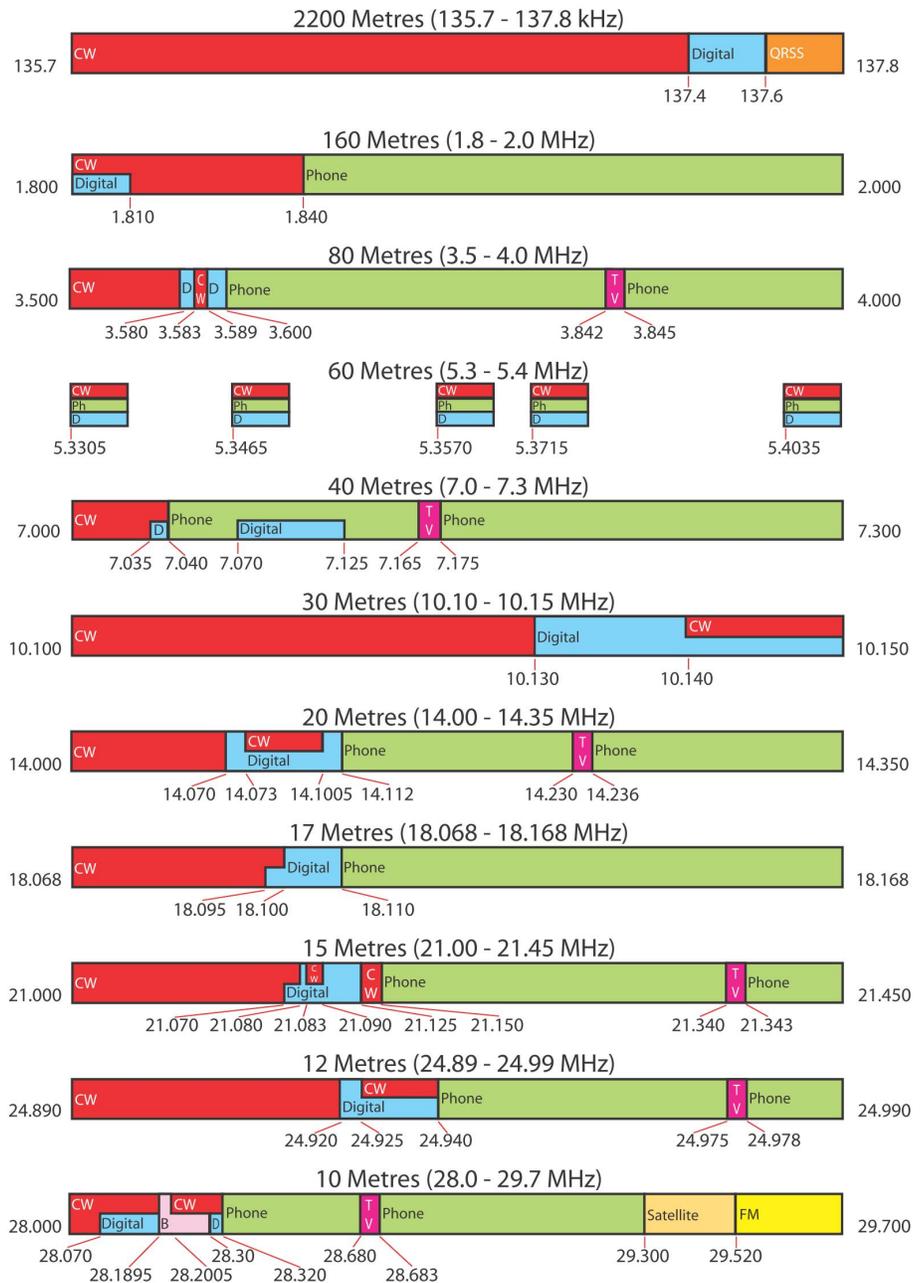


Canadian 0 - 30MHz Band Plan

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	■ TV
■ Ph	Phone	■ D
■ B	Beacons	■ S
■ Digital	Digital	

We were sitting on the veranda listening to the speaker we had wired out from the shack. There had been the odd six-meter opening, and this season we had taken an interest in 50 MHz. Six countries so far. It had only taken us three months of scanning the band every waking moment! Things were pretty quiet this afternoon . . . not even any TV beacons.

One of the local QRPers came beating his way around the bend and pounded his way up the hill, puffing and sweating in the early fall sunshine. He didn't waste any time and reached over and flicked off the speaker. "Whoa!" we snapped at him, "What are you doing? There just might be an opening to the Caribbean!"

"The Heck with the Caribbean!" he retorted, wiping the sweat from his upper lip and glaring at us. "Besides, you never work anything on that band anyhow. I've got an idea to get some life back into Ham radio. A new idea that will help everyone. And it is a sure fire way to up your DXCC totals too!"

We were immediately interested, because some days we got the feeling DXing was losing a bit of steam. "What's up?" we asked. The QRPer looked at us carefully. "OK, now this has to remain confidential until I get the bugs worked out, but I know I can trust you. It's a new way to encourage the DXers in those rare locations to get on the air. It'll only count for RTTY, and of course, Mixed DXCC, but it's better than them playing with the Internet." We looked at him with a puzzled stare. He continued on, "It's a new mode called HAMSTER. I thought up the name myself!"

It sounded like a rodent to us, but we put forth an interested look and he ploughed ahead. "You heard of this Napster thing, right? You know, the Internet program where everyone can connect their computers together with this software package and trade songs? Those MP3 things?" We nodded slowly and asked, "Yes, but isn't that illegal? Isn't there some lawsuit going on that isn't looking too good for the Napster company? What's that got to do with DXing, anyhow?"

"That's where all the DXers are!" he responded, waving his finger at us to drive the point home. "They're trading songs with their computers. Even the rare ones seem to all be on the Internet. And if the courts rule against Napster and shut it down, these guys will still want to trade MP3s. So we let them do it with HAMSTER!"

We should have kept quiet, but we asked anyhow, "What's HAMSTER?" The QRPer looked around cautiously and then continued on. "I got it almost all figured out. Remember I took a computer course last summer?" We nodded in agreement, for more than once this same QRPer had been up the hill to tell us of his newfound knowledge of computers. And we had just as stubbornly resisted getting a computer!

"OK, here's how it works. I'm just finishing off a program that converts MP3 binary files to MIME format." We held up our hand. "Isn't a mime an actor who performs without words? Just using gestures and paints his face all white? What's that got to do with DX . . . or with computers, for that matter?"

(Continued next page)

CQ Hamster (continued)— by Paul VE1DX {<https://www.ve1dx.net/Stories/story012.html>}

"No! No!" The QRPer said in an exasperated tone. "No, MIME is a computer format that converts binary files to plain characters so you can send them as simple text. Then you can convert them back to binary on the other end. So here's how it works. Once Napster shuts down, I'm going to turn HAMSTER loose! All those DXers with MP3 songs can convert them to MIME, and we'll grab 14.070 to 14.080 exclusively for HAMSTER. The heart of HAMSTER is PSK-31, which is a form of FSK, and thus counts as RTTY, right?" Having no idea, we just stared at the QRPer as he rolled on.

"Everyone connects to a central computer database using PSK-31 and publishes a list of their MIME MP3s and the frequency on the HAMSTER sub-band where they are listening. Then they can exchange them! Now, while doing so, they have to be making what counts as a two-way RTTY QSO. Even the rare guys will have to play the game if they want to continue to collect MP3s. So all I have to do is publish my list of 2500 MP3s using HAMSTER and the DX will come to me!" He smacked his fist into the palm of his hand and beamed with pleasure. "Imagine! I'll be just sitting on 14.075 MHz and an A5 or a VU7 will connect to me and take an MP3. And as soon as he does, I'll send off to him for a RTTY QSL! I figure I can work 250, maybe 300 countries without doing anything except logging the stations that connect to me! And the beauty of it is, everyone can do it! It's the new wave of DXing in the 21st century! HAMSTER IS!"

And with that, he ran off down the hill and around the corner. We just watched him go, scratching our head and wondering what he was talking about. Usually when a QRPer doesn't make any sense, it is wise to listen a little closer. Now and then they do hit upon something. Somehow, though, we couldn't see the folks at Newington getting too excited about QSOs involving mimes and hamsters. We gave it a bit more thought, and then we flipped the speaker back on. Sometimes it is best to leave things alone! DX IS!



Goin on Down the Road (Continued from pg 9) — by Art Horovitch (VE3AIH)

Feb 6

The DMR radio on worldwide 91 has been fantastic. You can work stations all over the world easily. Yesterday it was England and Australia. Today, while at the laundromat, I worked special event station SZ3PL020? in Patras, Greece. Later, sitting inside the Burger King waiting for the storm to pass, more DX stations. Heard 9K2FM from Kuwait and he was mobile driving a truck. Tonight it was New Zealand ZL4SY. His QTH is, get this: Kaka Point. He admitted the name of the town could be taken in a different meaning and we had a good laugh over that one. G6LNV in Hull, England came on and apologized profusely for accidentally transmitting on the channel while I was talking to someone else. Where do you find that on the HF bands today?

It's like old time ham radio. You actually get to talk to people, even though the contacts are usually short, about 5-6 minutes. The channel is very busy, so everyone gets a turn and no one hogs the frequency. I'm looking forward to the possibility of having Brandmeister talk groups on our Cornwall DMR repeater if it can be done without too much trouble. Talk group 91 worldwide does not seem to be available on Motorola DMR.

This 'n' That



Club Breakfast.



Here Goes Nothing!



Seaway Valley Amateur Radio Club

4672 O'Keefe Road
St. Andrews West, ON
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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.

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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

- **Iroquois Flea Market April 4 2020**
- **Raisin River Canoe Race April 19 2002**
- **Smith Falls Flea Market May 9 2020**
- **Field Day June 27/28 2020**



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



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