

# SVARC Monthly Newsletter

April 2020

Seaway Valley Amateur Radio Club

## Next Club Meeting: Wednesday 29 April, 2020

**Where:** Virtual meeting on repeater—VE3PGC 443.650 and Echolink until further notice.

**Time:** 19:00h (07:00 PM)

**Guest Speaker:** *Cancelled until further notice*

## 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 would like to thank all those that participated in our first ever virtual meeting. I have heard some feedback and all seem to be pleased with the way it was handled.

Hopefully this pandemic will not last thru the summer months. Camping season usually starts the first of May however I don't think that is going to happen either. I have heard that some closures are probably going to last till the end of June. I know a lot of us look forward to the camping season so we are going to have to find some other type of outdoor entertainment.

The amateur radio bands are pretty active these days. With a lot of us at home it seems it has gotten more amateurs on the airways. It is nice to see the bands so active and hopefully when we get thru this the bands will remain the same. The meeting on April 29 2020 will be another virtual meeting due the restrictions we are still under It will take place on VE3PGC at 7pm.

Lets all stay safe, keep your social distance to 2 meters and we will get thru this together.

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## From the Editor - Steve Harvey (VE3EZB)

COVID-19 edition—The BS virus ... almost as dangerous as the Corona virus.

WOW! What can I say? I have never seen anything like this in my 55+ years on this planet. Never have I felt so vulnerable to something that is almost completely out of my control. I say almost out of my control because there are aspects of this I can control. For example, I can stay home, venturing out only when absolutely necessary to purchase the necessities of life. I can be strict with social distancing. This not only protects me, it protects others should I be a carrier and not aware. Wash my hands, often ... this should be a no brainer. Basically, follow the guidelines set out by Health Canada.

Another thing I can do is to endeavour to not fall victim to, nor contribute to the spread of misinformation. For example, misinformation such as “this is just a cold, there is nothing to worry about”; “these home remedies will cure / protect you against COVID-19”; “COVID-19 is a bio-engineered, weaponized virus, released by accident (or deliberately) by the Chinese Government to affect the world economy.” If you can dream it up, I’ve seen it shared on social media and even in “mainstream” news recently. I have name for all this misinformation, I call it ... wait for it ... BS. This BS is a virus unto itself, spreading as fast as COVID-19.

In my opinion, whether you want it or not, people or organizations creating and spreading BS tend to have an inherent distrust of government and media to tell us the truth and/or by others who just want to cause further panic during this already stressful time. BS plays on peoples fears. People are scared. Most of us have never faced anything like this before. This makes reasonable people do and/or believe unreasonable things.

I know people, reasonable people, who have become somewhat unreasonable and absolutely believe BS as truth ... “truth that the government / mainstream media doesn't want you to know”. Even when presented with evidence that the BS has been debunked, for reasons I don’t understand, these folks still prefer to believe BS. I hope they see the light before the “truth” kills them by gargling with a “diluted bleach” solution if you have a sore or scratchy throat to kill the virus. Yes, that is among the BS I’ve seen.

It can be difficult to distinguish truth from BS. BS is often very well “constructed”, where on the surface, it seems reasonable. Fortunately for us, there are places we can turn to “fact-check” before we believe BS. Here are a few places I go to “fact-check before I post”. There are others but these should get you started.

<https://www.snopes.com/>

<https://www.hoax-slayer.com/>

<https://www.thatsnonsense.com/>

We all must do our part to ensure that we do not become victims of the BS virus (and of course the Corona virus). Following the guidelines set out by Health Canada is one way to do so, fact-checking BS is the other. It is my hope that eventually, we all will be able to look back on these times and be able to say we’ve survived two great pandemics of our time, COVID-19 and the BS virus.

Stay safe everyone, stay sane and remember to stay at least one 144 MHz wavelength apart. .

73—Steve (VE3EZB)

## Meeting Agenda — General (Monthly) Meeting—Wednesday 29 April 2020

Monthly meeting Wednesday April 29 2020

Virtual meeting on VE3PGC 443.650 and Echolink until further notice.

07:00 PM Meeting starts

### Business Arising:

Minutes of last meeting (March 25 2020) Chris (VA3CRR)

Treasurers Report – Elizabeth (VE3EZH)

Net Controllers Report – Tom (VA3KD)

Newsletter Report – Steve (VE3EZH)

Miscellaneous Reports

Repeater Report - Doug (VE3HTR)

    Web Report – Ed (VE3EAH)

    ARES Report – Earle (VE3IMP)

### New Business:

Discussion on Children's Treatment Center

Discussion on Field Day June 27/28 2020

Discussion on check in procedure for Monday net night

### Presentation:

Cancelled until further notice

### Upcoming Events:

- Iroquois Flea Market April 4 2020 CANCELLED
- Raisin River Canoe Race April 19 2020 CANCELLED
- Smith Falls Flea Market May 9 2020 CANCELLED
- Children's Treatment Centre May 30 2020 TENTATIVE ON COVID 19
- Field Day June 27/28 2020

### Adjournment:

Date, time and place of next meeting: Wednesday, May 27 2020 to be announced depending on Covid 19.

## Getting to Know You— Larry Giguere (VA3RSQ) (Club President)

*(Content edited from the original submission)*

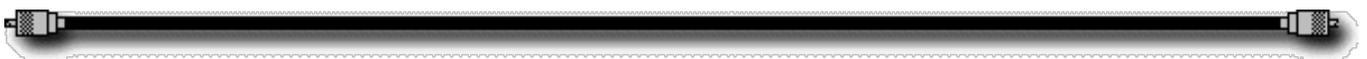
I started to get interested in Amateur radio when I lived in Ottawa in 1970. What started it all was my XM49777 call sign I had when we needed a licence for CB radio. I had been a truck driver for a few years and decided to “leave the road.” I had a Spitfire tube radio with a 50 foot tower and a 36 ft horizontal and vertical beam at my house. I used to belong to the Night Owl Club that started at midnight. It would not be unlike me to stay up till 4 am talking on the radio. Back then the (skip) propagation was excellent. I actually made a contact to Australia with 5 watts. My radio room had QSL Cards on three walls. So that made me think “I wonder how I can get on other frequencies?” The Ottawa Amateur Radio Club was running a course so I signed up for that. Unfortunately, I could not manage to learn Morse code which was required back then to get your licence. Someone told me I had a tin ear and could not put it together so I opted out of the course.

Many years later, while I was living in Tottenham, I was told that Morse code had been dropped as a requirement for getting your licence. So with the help of a friend and self study, I earned my basic with honours amateur licence. I believe that was in 1999. So I had to decide what call sign should I get. I worked at Mosport and Shannonville Race tracks for several years as a flagger and rescue worker. I had my own Rescue Squad for a BEMC and CRDA and it was called RSQ Motorsport Rescue. I thought “I wonder if VE3RSQ was available?” After all, I was in Ontario and doing rescue work at the track. Back then it was saved for some reason or another however VA3RSQ was available so hence my call sign. Later, the call sign VE3RSQ became available but I was too slow to change my mind so someone else took it.

I went back on the road again when I moved back to Tottenham and of course had my 10 and 11 meter radios along with a VHF radio in my rig. I made many contacts as I drove thru Canada and the USA. It helped keep me keep awake many a day and night.

I moved to Cornwall area about 10 years ago and installed a HF radio and antenna in the two different locations we lived in. I didn't listen to UHF or VHF very much so I didn't know about SVARC until later. I was at Lancaster Resort Trailer Park when I noticed an amateur licence plate VA3BS so needless to say I introduced myself to Dean. He was the one who got me involved with the club so I started to attend the meetings and events that the club helps out with.

That was a couple of years ago. I enjoyed the friendship and events that I attended. VE3EAH ED was looking to “retire” his position as President of the club so more or less I volunteered and you all know how that turned out. So as of 2020 I am now the President of SVARC.



## The DXCC Desk and the Uncertainty Principle—by Paul VE1DX {<https://www.ve1dx.net/Stories/story015.html>}

For some time now we had been wondering how long it would be before one of the local QRPers came along to discuss their latest DX crisis. Just when we were starting to believe that we would weather the storm unscathed, one came trudging around the corner and made his way up the hill. It was not surprising that he came with questions.

“Tell me”, he said, after quickly running us through the highlights of the week’s DX happenings “why has the DXCC desk instituted this new policy on 9U? It’s very confusing. I really keep up with the regulations because the final word on DX is set by the ARRL, right? And now, try as I might, I can’t follow their rationale. Why are they again changing the rules?” We weren’t aware of any special status or policy on Burundi that had drifted out of Newington. We were aware of the DXCC truism that ‘following the thinking of the DXCC desk is like a blind man looking for a black cat in a dark room that isn’t there.’ We asked for clarification, for it was apparent we had a confused QRPer on our hands.

“Well”, the QRPer said, with a furrowed brow and a distant look in his eyes, “I’ve been reading all the DX bulletins and DX discussion groups on the Internet. It seems that the league has released a list of six or seven 9U stations that are no longer counters for DXCC. Some of these used to count, or at least did up until a certain date and some never counted at all. Some apparently still do, if the call was issued to the right DXer. I heard that one was good for a few years, then was an 8-month period where it wasn’t, and now it is OK again.”

We looked at the QRPer and replied, “Well, to simplify matters a bit, you probably didn’t work them all. So take the one or two that you did work and call up the DXCC desk and ask them if they are counters.” The QRPer nodded. “That’s pretty much what I did . . . I sent in my cards for my 150 country sticker and one of the countries was 9U. They didn’t count it and I just got credit for 149. However, I had a QSO with another 9U station and before I sent that card in, I called the ARRL and asked if it was good. They took down the call sign, the date of the QSO, etc. and said they would call me back. But they never did.”

“Sometimes there is a backlog at the DXCC desk”, we replied, “and you can be sure they are doing their very best to help you. They removed the DXCC listings from QST to help DXers. We didn’t understand it at the time, and some still don’t, but it was the best thing for the DX community since Don activated Maria Teresa.”

The QRPer looked puzzled and asked with a sideways look: “Don? Who’s Don? Do you mean Don Search, W3AZD, the fellow who used to run the DXCC program? Would he have counted my 9U QSLs?”

Son of a Gun! Time was indeed marching on and this was the first time we’d heard of anyone mixing up W9WNV and W3AZD. We decided to get the QRPer back on track and focused on the apparent problem. “Never mind Don”, we began, “You’ve got to look at the big picture. The ARRL is a large hierarchical organisation and they are looking out for the good of the Amateur operator, right?” The QRPer nodded in agreement. “And you further understand that the DXCC is just a branch of the ARRL, a special wing of this vast organisation, right?”

“Yes, yes of course I do”, the QRPer said, a bit impatiently, “but I still want to know about my 9U cards.” We held up our hand and cut him off “First, you have to understand the ARRL and the DXCC desk. Only then will DX Enlightenment allow you to see these side issues a bit clearer. Now, as mentioned before, the ARRL realised some time ago that the DXCC program was costing too much . . . that they wouldn’t be able to continue to run it so well unless changes were made. So they stopped putting the DXCC listings in QST. They computerised the processing of all the QSLs and DXCC record keeping. They added user fees for all DXCC related services and upped the rates for pretty much everything they did for DXers. The idea was to help DXers! The increased revenues are now going directly to keep track of all these details that were slipping through before. Don’t you see the difference? The rules are being enforced, new ones that were long over due are being introduced and everything is faster and more efficient!”

Son of a Gun! We made a good pitch . . . we were even starting to believe this ourselves. We were sure we had caught the outside corner for the QRPer had to think this over for a bit. Apparently the pitch had been closer than we had thought, because it turned out to be a ball when the definitive word roared down the third base line. "So what you are saying is that the DXCC program is so efficient now that nothing will slip by", the QRPer said, "and that should I get any cards passed they will be certified as 100% authentic, with a guarantee that the QSO and the DXpedition were true blue. So that's why they are being so picky with the 9U QSLs, right? They want to prevent another XY0RR, correct?"

"No! Absolutely not!", we replied, "you're mixing common sense and politics. That's a common mistake all DXers make in their early days of DXing. We made that mistake many years ago when we first got interested in chasing those rare and exotic lands beyond the horizon."

We thought back to those glorious days for a few seconds, then continued on. "No, there is no logic to the DXCC desk. There never has been and there likely never will be. Stop looking for it and just be a DXer. Stand tall! Work the DX and collect the cards. Use your judgement . . . for as you attain DX Enlightenment, as you begin to understand the Mysteries of the Ages and the Eternal Enigmas of DXing, and when you finally understand the true meaning of DX IS!, it is then that you will become a true blue DXer. You will become one of the anointed ones . . . you will have become a Believer!

The QRPer looked at us for a moment. Evidently this was a premise that he found hard to digest. "So what you are saying is that the DXCC desk is not the final word on DXing, or on a particular QSL?" We thought about this for a moment and rather than answer directly, we suggested, "Think of it this way. The DXCC desk is an awards program offered by a radio club that you belong to. As Albert so often said, 'All things are relative, some more so.' It follows that if you belong to this radio club, and participate in their awards program, then the relativity of their thoughts on a particular country or QSL can become your frame of reference. You will see all your DX questions answered with crystal clarity and the confusion will dissolve before your very eyes. Make the DXCC desk your absolute frame of reference, son!"

We thought we finally had got through to him because he started down the hill deep in thought. Then he turned and we thought we saw the edge of a resentful stare, "OK, if all this is right, why is the DXCC just as slow doing things now as they were before they increased their revenues? Why does it still take three or four months to process cards and why haven't they called me back with an answer to my 9U question?"

It was almost as if the QRPer had listened and heard nothing. "Quantum mechanics and Heisenberg's uncertainty principle", we continued, trying another angle of attack.

The QRPer looked at us and asked, "Are you sure?" We looked back at him and replied "Absolutely. Look back through the letters to the editor, the DX columns and DX editorials in all the QSTs for the past 50 years. You'll see that the more things change, the more they stay the same. And while you may use the DXCC desk as your frame of reference, you will still find that Heisenberg's uncertainty principle prevents you from predicting both the decisions that are made in Newington and the speed at which anything coming from ARRL headquarters will happen."

The QRPer shrugged his shoulders in confusion and made his way down the hill. We wished him well, but until he finally discovered that DX IS! is the only absolute frame of reference in the universe, like Albert, he will be doomed to look for answers that do not exist.

All this theoretical discussion was starting to take its toll and our brain muscles were getting sore. We decided that it might be a good time to flip on the rig and see if we could exchange a quick 59 with Martti. For, Heisenberg's uncertainty principle or not, E44DX might count! All we have to do is ask the DXCC desk . . . DX IS!

## **A Terrifying Return Trip Home**

### **Mar 10**

We are getting ready to leave our campground in the national forest near Crawfordville, south of Tallahassee, FL. When Sue tried to pull in the bedroom slide, it didn't move. The motor was running but the slide didn't come in. This is the same problem we had near Knoxville in November so we are assuming the same fix is needed. A shear pin in the rack and pinion mechanism that moves the slide has broken again. However if the pin broke after 3 months, we need a stronger pin than we can get at local hardware stores. Art pushed the slide in while I pulled from the inside and we drove over to the Recreation Center and parked in their large, mostly empty lot so Art could get in some pickleball time.

### **Mar 11**

Art got on the phone, called the manufacturer of the slide system and arranged to have a new gear and TWO shear pins (always order one extra, just in case) sent to the local UPS office in Perry, FL where we are parking for 5 days with a friend in her yard.

### **Mar 12**

We got the news we had hoped we wouldn't hear. ARTA, the Alberta Retired Teachers Association health insurance that we are under has issued a news release. As of March 23, Covid-19 will not be covered for anyone outside of Canada, due to the travel advisory issued by the Canadian government. They are encouraging everyone to return home. Although other unforeseen illnesses will be covered, right now that is the one that is on everyone's mind. Exactly what we plan to do now, we aren't sure. We were able to contact a local repair dealer with a good reputation and he assured us he could take us and have it fixed on Tuesday. So we have decided to stay here until Tuesday, at least, to have the slide fixed.

### **Mar 16**

We have the parts and we are off to have the bedroom slide fixed that we have waited over the weekend for. We pull up and discover at 5 to 9 that the gate is still locked. We pull onto the grass on the side of the road to wait for our 9 AM appointment. Shortly after 9 AM, one of the employees arrive and drives in. Art gets out to talk to him and receives the bad news. The RV repair association of Florida got together by internet last night and decided for the health of their employees and themselves, they were all closed down immediately. Art called the boss and explained we waited all weekend for the appointment, but he would not budge. They would not take us. When I asked why he would not honour his commitment to take us, he started swearing at me. If we knew we were going to have to travel home with the bedroom slide in all the time, we would have left on Friday! Now, we have no choice but to head north towards the I-10 and up the I-95 as fast as possible, putting on 350-400 miles per day. Not our usual style of travelling.

### **Mar 18**

After a short stop in Richmond, VA to visit our daughter and grandkids and give them "air hugs" from 6 ft away, we continue north to Maryland and Pennsylvania. Our check engine light came on just after Gettysburg. We stopped where we could and Art checked that we hadn't run out of oil and made sure the gas tank was fitting properly. Just a little slow-down on approaching the roads that circle Washington, DC and then up I-83 and I-81. As we hit the hills on I-81, the power the truck was putting out was down, but as we went further, it got impossible. I was down to 20 mph in 2<sup>nd</sup> gear and worried that I wasn't going to make it up to the top. The tachometer was red-lining at 3300 RPM. We took the first exit and stopped on the ramp but Art felt it wasn't safe so we continued onto route 209 north towards Tremont. When we saw a large gravel lot near an electrical power substation, we pulled in even though it was far from level. We started with calls to our road service, Coachnet, and they had to find a place that would take the Dodge truck and then somewhere we could park the trailer overnight. They found the Dodge dealer in Pottsville where they could drop the truck and it would be checked first thing in the morning. But there was no room to park the trailer there. First they checked with a hotel parking lot. They wanted \$30 for us to use their parking lot and \$40 if we

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

needed to use our generator. Ridiculous! So, she gave us a phone number for a campground. But they were still closed for the season. Walmart was not answering their phone. They finally got permission to have us towed to Cracker Barrel in Frackville... about 9 miles further north than the dealer where the truck is. Later the towing company, Pine Grove Towing, said we could stay on their lot till the truck was fixed.

About an hour later, we called the JLR towing company that Coachnet had told us was coming. They said they never got the OK to tow and never came out. Who did tow our truck and where did it go then? They had no idea. I pulled out the photos I took of the truck being loaded, and got the name off the side of the truck and could even read a phone number for them: Pine Grove Towing. We called them and yes, the truck had been delivered to the dealer and they were trying to find a truck and hitch to pull the trailer. It seems the first towing company they called refused to serve us. I called him and he said, we are Canadians, so we represent a potential threat. (your northern security risk, as Trump said when he imposed tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum) He didn't know the status of the virus in Canada, so we were a threat to him. Paranoid!

Around 9 PM, we got the call they were just at the corner and minutes away. Only thing is, they could not take us in their truck (due to the virus). We would have to ride in the trailer. In Canada this is illegal but they assured us that as long as they had a way to communicate with us, it is done here. So we used our phones to stay in touch. At that point we didn't feel we had any choice. With their help, we hitched the trailer to their truck and went inside to lay on the bed. It wasn't as bad a ride as I thought it would be but crazy thoughts of where we might be going went through my mind. After 15 minutes (maybe less) we were stopped in front of their property. They showed us where the electric plug was and we unhitched after levelling. Tomorrow we should hear from the dealer about the truck but if it needs parts, I don't know how long it is going to take.

Ten-thirty and we have just finished supper. Time to get some sleep. We thought that by now we would be 120 miles further north and sure we would cross the border tomorrow. Now... who knows? We're praying that there is no mandatory shutdown of all car dealers and parts stores.

### **Mar 19**

We were up early anxious to hear about the truck. We called Dodge just before 9 and learned that they thought maybe it had something to do with the fuel system according to the error reader. By 10:30 the truck had a new fuel filter and was ready. Then the fun began. We were 18 miles away from the dealer. Due to the virus, no one was willing to take us in their car to get it. We tried taxis, Uber, rent a car, etc. The Dodge dealer normally would have been willing to come get us but half his staff was off. By 1 pm we were getting frantic. Finally we contacted Pine Grove towing again and suggested they send two drivers in one car, get the truck that we've paid for by phone, and bring it back. We, of course, would have to pay for that. By 2 PM, we were told they had gone and we should have the truck back by 3 PM. We wait, and wait and finally by 3:30 our truck appears – on the bed of one of their tow trucks!

We had the trailer all ready to go. I wiped down with alcohol the surfaces that they probably touched, and I backed it up to the trailer. Unfortunately, because of the slant we were on, we couldn't extend the legs far enough and I guess the hitch didn't go into the receiver far enough to actually lock, even though it appeared that way. Art hooked up the electric and breakaway cable while I retracted the legs. Then I went to inch forward so we could remove the chocks. Bang! The trailer came down on the rail of the truck bed doing some damage on the rail and cracking the fiberglass on the front of the trailer. A few choice words!\$%#& and we extended the legs again. This time when I backed up I hit it much harder to make sure the pin went in properly. We have to check the hitch now each time to make sure that the arms of the hitch are securely wrapped around the pin of the trailer.

After driving for several hours, we are in New York, but have to stop due to high winds. The temp tonight will be 17F. We decide to stop in Cortland at the Country Music Camp so we can plug in and get our AC tank heaters working. While driving we can use the 12 volt tank heaters, but once stopped, there is too much drain on the battery for that.

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

**Mar 20**

We were up at 8 am and onto the road shortly after 9. We had two stops for diesel before the border, neither took very long. We headed north of Watertown to the 1000 Islands border crossing. Traffic had been very light and we wanted to cross back into Canada as soon as possible. With everything shutting down in the US, we didn't want to risk any further problems and get stuck again. To our surprise, there was someone directing traffic at customs and he pointed us to the Commercial/RV lane where an RV was just pulling out. Without stopping, we pulled in. We were asked about time away, firearms, alcohol, and symptoms. Then we were handed a sheet of paper about the virus and told to go directly home without stopping and self-isolate for 14 days. It seemed they want to get people through as fast as possible. We stopped for lunch at EnRoute just 30 km from home.

Later, talking to Doug, he said many snowbirds endured a nightmare of closed restaurants (and restrooms) as they travelled north from Florida. They are fine when they stay in a hotel for the night. But what do they do when driving during the day? I guess we are fortunate to have our kitchen, bathroom and bedroom with us when travelling. We passed our time listening to a Kindle story or podcasts and hourly newscasts to hear how the situation was evolving. As we headed north, it just seemed to get worse and worse.

So ends an eventful and sometimes terrifying return trip home. No time for ham radio. Plenty of time for that once we are self-isolated for 14 days.



# This 'n' That

Random pics of the recent work carried out at the Cornwall Hospital Repeater Site.



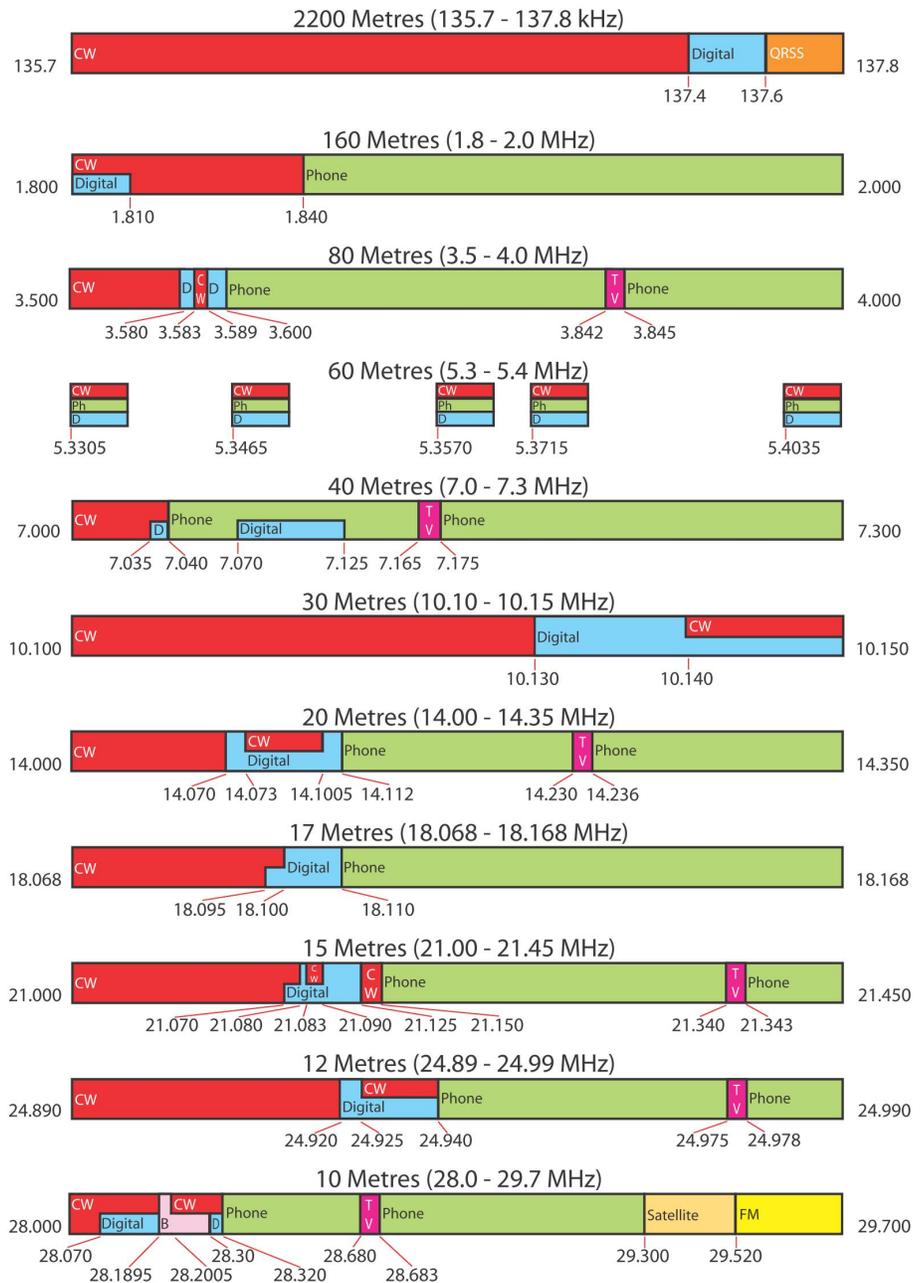


# Canadian 0 - 30MHz Band Plan

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					
<span style="color: red;">■</span> CW	CW	<span style="color: yellow;">■</span> FM	FM	<span style="color: magenta;">■</span> TV	SSTV
<span style="color: orange;">■</span> QR	CW QRSS	<span style="color: pink;">■</span> B	Beacons	<span style="color: blue;">■</span> D	Digital
<span style="color: green;">■</span> Ph	Phone	<span style="color: yellow;">■</span> S	Satellite		

## Testing, Testing, Testing... (not for Corona) — by Art Horovitch



We are back in Cornwall and very thankful to be out of the craziness south of the border. We are keeping busy working on small projects that have been aside to be completed “in the “fullness of time”, as our vice president is fond of saying.

When I picked up my mail, there was a package from China. It was a 328 megatester which cost all of \$6 USD shipped by mail back in early February to my post office box in Cornwall. (no shipping charge)

It's a neat little “toy” which can test resistance, inductance and capacitance within certain limits, even check bipolar transistors. I have not tried it on FET's yet. There are no instructions at all. You just connect up a 9 volt battery and start to use it. I first noticed this device while in Florida. My friend Doug K4GKG had brought a bunch of CQ magazines to the winter field day. The article was in the August 2019 issue with a review and detailed instructions. The four main components are the digital readout, a line of slots to insert the device to be tested, a small lever to lock the device into the slots and a push button to turn the device on or off. If you forget to turn it off, it will shut down after about a minute to conserve the battery.



So, on to the testing. My first attempt was partially successful, which led to me given a poor report on the device. After I read the CQ article, I realized I had inserted the devices into the wrong slots. On the board just above the blue slot affair, there numbers which correspond to the slots. They are numbered 1,2,3, 1,1,1,1. You can consider all the #1 slots as neutral and the 2 and 3 slots as hot. You push the device you are testing into any #1 slot and the other one into a #2 or #3. Press the lever to lock the device down and it will immediately come up with the type of device and its characteristics. I tried a resistor with color code green-brown-red and expected 5100 ohms. Instead it came up with 5900 ohms. I checked it with my VOM and the reading was very close to 5900 ohms. Either I am going color blind or the resistor was mismarked or changed value over time.



On to a diode. The display showed the diode and indicated its polarity as well as its capacitance, something unexpected.

It will test small capacitors in the uF or pF range. The type that we use for bypass or coupling capacitors in a circuit. It does appear to be fairly accurate. It does have a limited range for testing electrolytic caps as well. Testing a LED again showed polarity and also the voltage drop across the device. The led was glowing under test.

It will test small capacitors in the uF or pF range. The type that we use for bypass or coupling capacitors in a circuit. It does appear to be fairly accurate. It does have a limited range for testing electrolytic caps as well. Testing a LED again showed polarity and also the voltage drop across the device. The led was glowing under test.



Something rather strange with inductance, though. When I tested a small air wound coil expecting a uH reading instead it came up as a resistor of 0.15 ohms. A check of this coil with my capacitance tester showed about 8 uH. This requires further exploration. To test a bipolar transistor, you use slots 1 and 3 in the top row and I think slot 2or 3 in the bottom row.

All in all it's a fun thing to play with and may be useful if you want to test a handful of items of the same type to see which are good and which not. Have fun, stay safe and keep washing those hands.



Editor's tester in a 3D printed case.

One of the local QRPers came by the other day and he was in a bit of a quandary. "You know" he began, "ever since I got my ticket, I've always wondered why HAMS get on the air during Straight Key Night. I can understand a few might want to go back to the traditional ways of doing things now and then, but why use a straight key? And why dedicate a whole night to it?" We shrugged for the moment, for we were sure this was leading somewhere other than Straight Key Night. "The thing is" he continued, "I don't see why they waste the time and energy tying up the bands with their shaky fists and poorly weighted code. As you know, I send perfect CW. Always."

We had to know more. "Yes, but what does one night hurt? Is there a one-day DXpedition planned for that evening? You've always been a good CW operator . . . we've heard you in there dozens of times busting the pileups. Have you been working SSB too much and lost your CW?"

The QRPer took a few steps back and forth and turned to look us right in the eye. "No. Nothing like that. I just can't work CW with a straight key anymore. Why, 10-12 years ago I could send 20-WPM CW with my trusty old Marconi Marine key. Remember that one? It was a classic from the 50's and I picked it up at a Hamfest for a couple of dollars. You were there when I bought it, remember?" We recalled that day and said, "Yes, we were. And you got a real winner, with ball bearings and all. You were lucky to get to it before anyone else. Don't you have it anymore?"

The QRPer beamed with pride: "I sure do have it! And it's still in mint condition, too! However, I found that in the pileups I just wasn't making it when the DX was rattling off QSOs at 30 WPM . . . and while I could copy that fast, I found that if I didn't match the DX operator's speed fairly close, he rarely would work me." We had to agree that we too had noticed this. After all, this wasn't one of the Eternal Enigmas of DXing. For as the Old Timer had so often advised, "When in Rome do as Rome does, and when working DX, do as the DX does."

"So what happened?" we asked. "Well, I bought an iambic keyer and got my speed up to about 28-30 WPM and that made sure I got through most of the DX pileups."

We got an inkling of where this was going, so we just nodded for the QRPer to continue. "And then I found out that the place to fill band countries was during the contests. Those guys show up from some pretty rare locations and most of them send at 35-40 WPM . . . why I bet some of the top dogs can hit 50 WPM at peaks. And, iambic keyer or not, I couldn't keep up with them. So I got one of those HAL DKB-2010 keyboards to key my rig . . . perfect CW with a buffer and memory and all that. And more recently I got a computer with tons of memory and a CW sending program. Now I send and receive at no less than 30-WPM and I'm comfortable at 40-50. No DXpedition or contest operator can out 5NN TU me!"

We just gazed at the QRPer for a moment with a poker face. He kept on going, "The thing is, I hooked up my straight key a day or so ago and I can't send anything with it. Why, I can't even call CQ DX! It's too slow. And even worse, I went up to the novice portion of the bands and listened to the new comers sending at 5-10 WPM and I could hardly copy a character they were sending. They are just plain too slow! So I went to the Packet Cluster and found a DX spot, when I tuned on him at about 35 WPM, the 5NN TU just jumped out at me. And when I called him and he came back, my call was crystal clear at 35 WPM. Where are all the good CW ops these days? Are they all DXers and contesters? If they would send at a decent speed and use a memory keyer or computer, they'd be a lot easier to work! I really think the ARRL should lobby the FCC to make the entry level 25-WPM."

Son of a Gun! We looked at the QRPer for a few moments. "And you can copy and send your call and 5NN TU at 50 WPM, right?" The QRPer nodded in agreement. "And how about your QTH, or the operators call, or anything else that might be sent or received?"

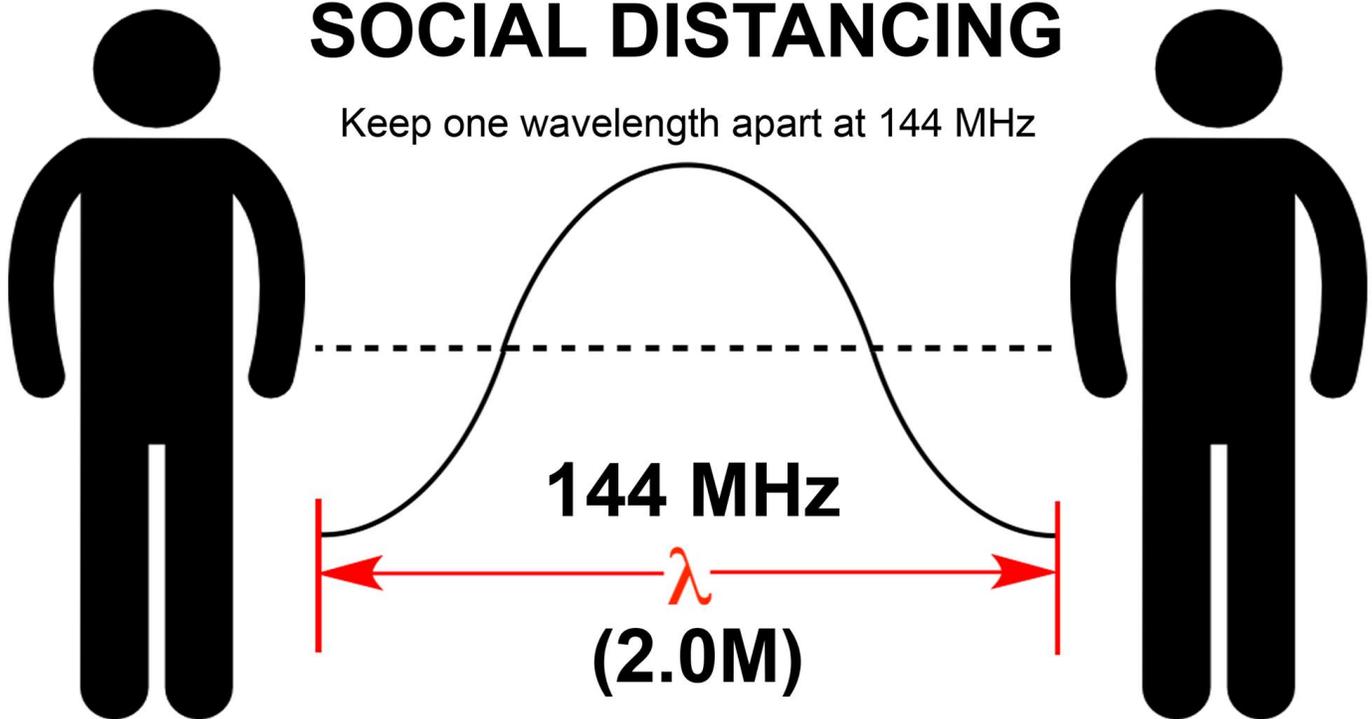
It was the QRPer's turn to look puzzled. "Why would I want to? Their call is on the Packet Cluster and all I have to do is adjust my sending program so my speed will match theirs. To be a DXer you have to watch the Packet Cluster religiously and then press the send button. I don't understand why anyone

would want to tie up a whole night creeping along at 15 WPM with a straight key . . . and I'm pretty sure some of the ones that I heard were Ws working other Ws. Why do they do that?"

There are many things in this world that defy logic and explanation. This was one of them, so we just looked at the QRPer for a moment and said, "They probably do it because they like it." The QRPer looked back, shook his head slowly and said, "These are really strange times on the bands, aren't they?" And before we could answer, he was off down the hill, hands in his pockets and still slowly shaking his head back and forth. One of us was marching to the beat of a different drummer. We'd been in this situation with the QRPers before and sometimes it wasn't obvious who was out of step. This time we had a pretty good idea. DX IS! . . . but don't try to work the guys on Straight Key Night at 50 WPM with a computer!

## Amateur radio enthusiast guide to **SOCIAL DISTANCING**

Keep one wavelength apart at 144 MHz



# 34<sup>th</sup> Signals Regiment completed its 29<sup>th</sup> year – Radio Station Santa, North Pole at the Shriners Hospital for Children (Canada), Montreal



By Noble John Grow

Started in 1990, with the goal of setting up a portable radio station, on site at the Shriners Hospital of Children (Canada) in Montreal. The goal was to provide patients of the hospital the chance to speak to Santa Claus at the North Pole.

Santa Claus has the assistance of a radio operator at his location, handling communications and North Pole activities. With his list of children, Santa, knows the names, where they are from, if they have siblings, pets, or something special in their lives. He calls each child by name, and has a conversation centered on the life of the child. At the end of talk, there is no doubt that they spoke to the real Santa at the North Pole. Some of the children, who's condition makes its hard to communicate with Santa, have smiles and glimmers of hope and happiness. One patient, Luka, waited for 2 months for this day to arrive. His young age, and his condition, did not stop his enthusiasm, and interacting positivity with the members of the 34th Signal Regiment.

The hospital staff were very excited, and supported of our efforts. We are also invited back to provide future communication support in the coming year(s).

Members who set-up and supported this 1 day operation were; W.O. Ashley Csenar, Pvt. Jessie Berube, Pvt. Alexander Azevedo, Sdt Serge Dube and Noble John Grow (712 Communications Squadron veteran & Shriner Hospital volunteer) Santa Claus was played by Noble Wayne Houlzet.



## Shriners Hospital for Children - Canada

<https://www.shrinershospitalsforchildren.org/montreal>

This is the only Canadian Shriners hospital in North America.

## Karnak Shriners – Quebec, Canada

<http://karnakshrine.com>

And Ill Sir Gille Dube received his 50 year pin



**Hopitaux Shriners**  
pour enfants®  
**Shriners Hospitals**  
for Children®

**Canada**



Seaway Valley Amateur Radio Club

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[www.svarc.ca](http://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 2018—2020

- **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

- **Raisin River Canoe Race April 19 2020—CANCELLED Due to COVID-19**
- **Smith Falls Ham-fest May 9 2020—CANCELLED Due to COVID-19**
- **Children's Treatment Centre May 30 2020—Decision Pending**
- **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"