



Ottawa Amateur Radio Club

Groundwave

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Check out our Web Page: www.oarc.net

Nov 2004

This month's Groundwave is a little thin due to the fact I have just taken over as editor and am still learning the ropes. I hope you will all help me out by sending me lots of articles for inclusion in forthcoming issues. They can be technical, or not. They can be operational, or not. The only requirement is that they should have something to do with amateur radio. And I may even relax that a bit. Remember that I can't print what I don't have. See page 2 for information on submissions.

Note that the RAC Winter Contest is early this year—Saturday December 18, 0000 to 2359Z—so plan accordingly by doing your Christmas shopping early. RAC decided to let a Kingston club have the VA3RAC call sign for this year's contest, so I will be organizing a multi-operator, multi-station entry, similar to last year, using the OARC's call sign, VE3RC. George Roach has generously agreed to amalgamate the log entries. Please email me if you are interested in operating. You can operate from your own station, on whatever band, at whatever time, you wish, using the VE3RC call sign.

And, by the way don't forget to send in your dues for RAC membership, if you haven't already done so. Apparently only one in 15 Canadian amateurs is a RAC member!

Editor, Ian Jeffrey



NOVEMBER MEETING November 10, 19:30 in the Honeywell Room at Ottawa City Hall

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Ottawa Amateur Radio Club

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Articles may be submitted for use in this publication provided that they portray events or activities that promote Amateur Radio. Letters and comments are also welcome. Submissions may be made by mail addressed to the Editor care of the OARC, or by e-mail to "ve3igi@rac.ca". Deadline for submissions occurs on the last Monday of the month preceding any regular meeting of the OARC.

Please support your local radio organisations. They support you!

Club Information

The Ottawa Amateur Radio Club Inc. is an association of Radio Amateurs devoted to the promotion of interest in Amateur Radio communications in the National Capital Area and to the advancement and achievement of club members.

Regular Meetings of the OARC Inc. are held on the second Wednesday of each month (except July and August) in the Richmond Room (2nd floor of the Old Teacher's College) of Ottawa City Hall (formerly Regional Municipality of Ottawa Carleton Headquarters) on Lisgar Street. Meetings commence at approximately 19:30 hours. Further details about each meeting is elsewhere in this publication.

Executive Meetings of the OARC Inc. are normally held on the first Wednesday of each month at 19:30 hours. Contact the President to confirm the date, time and place of the next meeting.

The CAPITAL CITY FM Net meets every Monday at 20:00 hours on the club repeater **VE2CRA** to pass traffic and to make announcements of interest to Amateurs in the National Capital Region.

The SWAP Net is a service provided and conducted by Ed Seib, VA3ES. This feature appears on the Capital City FM Net. To list items and make inquiries, call Ed at 613 738 8924 or e-mail him at va3es@rac.ca. Also available on the web: <http://www.igs.net/~swap>

The POT-HOLE Net is a SSB/HF net sponsored by the Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club and is conducted every Sunday at 10:00 hours on **3.760 MHz**. All amateurs are welcome to check in.

The POT-LID CW Net is an informal slow-speed CW net sponsored and conducted by Ed Morgan, VE3GX, and meets every Sunday, except during July and August, at 11:00 hours on **3.620 MHz**, to promote interest in CW and CW procedures.

The QCWA CHAPTER 70 Net meets every Thursday evening at 20:00 hours on repeater VE3TEL, **147.03** You do not have to be a QCWA member to participate.

The Ottawa Valley VHF/UHF SSB Net is sponsored by the West Carleton ARC. Look for it every Tuesday night (except the first Tuesday of the month) around 21:00 on **144.250**, (listening on 50.150, 432.150, 222.150 and 1296.100 as well.) Horizontal polarization is encouraged although vertical will work

The Ottawa Amateur Radio Club bulletin "Groundwave" is published and distributed to club members by mail. Publication dates may vary but it is hoped that the bulletin arrives at its destination before the events listed in it have expired. The bulletin is not published for July and August when meetings do not occur. Every effort is made to provide accurate information in the bulletin, however we are all human and mistakes can be made. The OARC accepts no responsibility for any damages that may result from this. The opinions expressed in this bulletin are only those of the author.

Voice (VHF) 146.94/146.34 100Hz output tone
(UHF) 443.300/448.300

VE3ATV Amateur Fast Scan Television Repeater
Video/audio beacon & input 439.25 MHz (audio sub. 443.75)
Video/Audio output 914 MHz (FM)

IRLP Node 2040 146.94/146.34 (VE2CRA/VE3RC)
(Code 411 for info) (Code 204 for activity)
(Code 88 for time)

For further information please contact the Repeater Chair.

Note: The IRLP link not connected to ECHOLINK. Please do not try to connect using the alpha keys on your keypad. It just confuses the operator.

Note: The IRLP link is disabled during the Capital City Net each Monday. It is disabled from 2000 to 2145 Mondays except for May to August when the link is disabled from 2000 to 2020.

VE3TEN

Tuning in the beacon so that it makes sense requires you tune to **28.175** on cw and read the tone that is there . The spaces between the elements are the higher tone. If that doesn't work, tune to **28.175.28** on lower sideband for better results.



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IRLP News

Minutes of the October General Meeting

October 13, 2004 19:30

The meeting was called to order by the president, Diane Bruce (VA3DB). There were 31 present including two guests James Smith (VE3NVJ) and Robert Montreuil.

It was moved by Doug Leach (VE3XK) and seconded by Liz Johnson (VA3ELB) that the minutes of the September general meeting be accepted. The motion was carried.

There were several presentations this evening. First Greg Danylchenko (VE3YTZ) presented a video describing his summer and winter ham shacks. Described were antennae, feedline entry through the window, station equipment, accessories, and layout. This is the first in what is hoped will be a series of "Ham Shack of the Month" presentations.

This was followed with a presentation by Diane and Bryan Campbell (VE3ZRK) illustrating some easily built 2-m and 70-cm hand-held antennae for satellite work.

Thirdly there was a slide show of photographs from the 2004 OARC Field Day.

Doug Leach announced that a replacement president, Earle Smith (VE6NM), and first vice-president, John Iliffe (VA3JI) were elected by the RAC board to fill two vacancies caused by ill health.

George Roach (VE3BNO) reminded everyone of the upcoming QCWA convention, October 15-17.

Cary Honeywell (VE3EV) announced that we are still in need of a volunteer(s) for the Groundwave editor position otherwise it will cease publication. The membership thanked Cary for his excellent work during his term as editor.

After the break, the 50-50 draw of \$19.50 was won by Mike Kelly (VE3FFK). Mike donated a further \$0.50 to the club.

Several club members who knew and worked with him shared reminiscences of Larry Kayser (VA3LK) SK. A nice tribute to Larry was included in the October issue of the Groundwave and on the ARRL website. Larry's family has asked that donations be sent to the United Christian Broadcasters, PO Box 23095, Belleville, Ontario K8P 5J3.

It was moved by Diane Bruce, seconded by Bryan Campbell, and approved that the meeting be adjourned. The next general meeting will be held on November 10. The meeting was adjourned at 21:30.

Ian Jeffrey, Secretary

We made the mistake of thinking that all we needed to do is fix up the UHF link system and pug it into the existing IRLP system and walk away from it.

Nope. Looks like a gremlin has found its way into the circuits. Bryan, VE3ZRK, and I have scratched the hair off our collective heads trying to find where the touch tones are going. They don't seem to be making it to the decoder, so for the moment I, once again, have the system here at home. Hopefully I will have it operational by the second week of November. Well, at least we can hope.

I have recently been informed that the software we are running with IRLP won't be supported by the installation team. We will have to migrate the Red Hat Linux version 9.x as older versions are no longer being supported by the manufacturer. It won't be a big problem. Just takes some time.

VE3EV

ATTENTION

This space is available for your article!



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Joe Norton Award

NASA Predicts Early Solar Minimum.

On Oct. 11th and 12th 2004, there were no sunspots, a sign that the solar minimum is coming, and it's coming sooner than expected says NASA. The average solar cycle is about 11 years, but its length can vary from as little as 9 to as much as 14 years.



Scientists working at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center have examined data from the last 8 solar cycles and discovered that solar Min follows the first spotless day after solar Max by 34 months. The most recent solar maximum was in late 2000. The first spotless day after that was Jan 28, 2004. So, using Hathaway and Wilson's simple rule, solar minimum should arrive in late 2006. That's about a year earlier than previously thought.

The next solar maximum might come early, too, Solar activity intensifies rapidly after solar minimum. In recent cycles, Solar Max has followed Solar Min by 4 years. That would make the next maximum around 2010.

For the full story, visit the NASA web site at:

http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2004/18oct_solarminimum.htm?list475816

Canadian Space Weather Forecasts on the Internet

Stéphane Burgoyne VE2OWL, has brought to our attention an interesting web site set up by the Canadian Government to provide current "Space Weather" reports and forecasts which may be useful to radio amateurs using both HF and VHF bands.

Have a look at:

http://www.spaceweather.gc.ca/myservlet/geomag_CLF/main_e.jsp

You can click on the "current space weather" and "latest forecast" buttons for more info.

QRP Special Event Station VC3W

Jeff Hetherington VA3JFF, of Welland Ontario says will be operating QRP Special Event Station **VC3W** from 0000Z 23 October 2004 until 2359Z 23 December 2004. The call sign will be used to commemorate the 175th Anniversary of the Opening of the original Welland Canal. A special photo QSL card is being printed and he will be active as much as possible over the next two months to give all of the special event hunters an opportunity to contact him. Your best chance to find VC3W on the air will be:

ARCI Fall QSO Party
CQWW Contests
Canada Winter Contest
November 13 1700Z on 14.260 from The Island, ON-109 for Canadian Islands Program
November 14 1700Z on 14.260 from Merritt Island, ON-110 for Canadian Islands Program

Jeff will be active on all bands, 2 through 160 at some point in time over the period of authority for VC3W.

Entry Information

The OTTAWA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB INC. annually awards the Joe Norton Trust Award for the advancement of amateur radio. This cash prize is given to a new amateur each year by way of a short essay contest.

The amount of this award is approximately \$500.

ELIGIBILITY:

To be eligible, a candidate must:

1. Be a resident of the National Capital Region as defined by the official federal government map.
2. Have received a Certificate of Proficiency in radio from Industry Canada during the 2 year period prior to the award. (June 1, 2002 to June 1, 2004 for the 2004 award).
3. Send a written submission of no less than 600 words and no more than 900 words to the executive of the Ottawa Amateur Radio Club Inc., setting out his or her interests, achievements and plans to contribute to the advancement of amateur radio.
4. Present him/herself for an interview if so requested by the judges.

RULES

1. Entries must be received after September 1 and before the closing date, which is 5 P.M. local time on the second Wednesday in November. No entries received after that time will be considered. (For the year 2004, entries will be accepted until November 24, 2004.)
2. The OARC will send an acknowledgment in writing or in person upon receipt of an application.
3. A panel of judges appointed by the executive of the Ottawa Amateur Radio Club Inc. will evaluate all entries.
4. Finalists may be interviewed by members of the executive of the Ottawa Amateur Radio Club Inc., the panel of judges, or both.
5. Submissions will not be returned.
6. If the judges do not select a candidate in any year, no award shall be made in that year and the monies shall return to the trust fund.
7. All decisions of the executive of the Ottawa Amateur Radio Club Inc. are final.
8. The winner will be notified within 10 days time of the closing date.



DC to Green Light Snap! Pow! Bang!

9. The winner will inform the Ottawa Amateur Radio Club Inc. of his or her acceptance of the award with in 17 days of the closing date.
10. The award presentation will be made during the regular meeting of the Ottawa Amateur Radio Club Inc. in December.
11. The winner agrees to have his or her name, photograph and address published in club bulletins, trade papers and magazines, and on the airwaves.

ENTRIES

By mail, to:

Joe Norton Trust Award
Ottawa Amateur Radio Club Inc.
Box 8873
Ottawa, ON
K1G 3J2

By email, to:

Executive@oarc.net

Email entries must be in plain ASCII text only. No word processor formatting, no word processor attachments allowed.

Be certain to include your full name, address, call sign, and your e-mail address and your e-mail address if you have one, in your submission.

Secretary, OARC

Ain't technology wonderful? Not!

Life used to be fairly simple. You could predict the wattage of a resistor by its size. The type of capacitor by its shape. A tube was a tube and it glowed brightly in the dark. Amateur equipment was big and impressive. Life as an Amateur was good.

Then along came technology. It was supposed to make life easier. Well, perhaps it did but I think that in certain ways it didn't. Have a look at the latest version of the hamshack. It really looks impressive with all the knobs and LED's. There is a tuning control for everything you can think of, and some that you will never need much less understand. If you dare to open the rig up, I challenge you to intuitively know what everything does; like Amateurs used to do. Bet you can't.

Back in the late 60's most of us used equipment that contained discrete components. You know: resistors, capacitors, inductors and the like. Today it is almost impossible to find more than a few items in the average Ham rig that even look like capacitors. Or a resistor. Or anything else that was familiar like tubes! We used to scoff at the thought of being an appliance operator. You know. Someone who "bought" his equipment already to plug in and work the world. Ok. Yes you could always find a Heathkit SB series station but someone usually had to build it. The only time you got one built is if it was bought second hand; and that doesn't count. Even the proud Viking Ranger was often obtained as a kit.

I know. What's Viking Ranger. Sigh! What is the world coming to anyway.

Well, receivers were a different sort. You didn't normally build a receiver when you could get a good Hammerlund or National HRO receiver for next to nothing. Even my old RBG-2, actually a Hammerlund HQ-120, was a pretty good find even if the bandspread dial was for military frequencies and not the Amateur band.

I know. What's a bandspread dial. Go ahead. Make my case for me.

At the QCWA convention in Ottawa this past month I even heard one of the speakers asking what a "Q Multiplier" was. He looked as though he was old enough to have used one himself but I guess looks are deceiving. What's a "Q" multiplier? Gad!

If you scan copies of QST from the 50's and 60's you can see where I am coming from. You needed a wide angle lense on your camera just to get the whole station horizontally in the picture. You needed a second picture to get the height. Quite a few pieces of equipment were rack mounted in 19 inch cabinets. That's 19 inches wide for you youngsters. Size it what counted. The bigger the equipment is the better the chance that you could work the world. At least that was the theory. Mind you, you needed the large cabinets because all those resistors, capacitors and tubes took some space. Lets not mention the power supplies that fed these beasts. It was "looks first" and "functionality second". Works for me.

Working on them was delightful as well. If you did something wrong the resulting "pow" or "bang" was enough of a clue to indicate that you had erred. Of course the smoke and foul smell added value to the experience. Nowadays all you get is a slight "piffed" then nothing.



DC to Green Light continued

Speaking of noise, ever turn on a Heathkit DX-100? Do you know what a DX-100 is? Never mind. Imagine flipping a circuit breaker on your household electrical panel. If you still use fuses, then you won't understand this but it makes a very satisfying clunk. Not a click either. A good solid "clunk"! This is followed by a slight hum from the power supply which accompanies the clicking sound of the tubes as they warm up to operating temperature. Then came that smell. Yes the pleasant smell of dust warming up. You can't beat it for nostalgia. If you were a real pro, your equipment might also smell of the anti-fungus paint that coated the components of many surplus transmitters. Ah. The memories.

Transmitting with the DX-100 was an experience as well. You turned on the plate switch and started to key. At every "dit" and "dah" the plate transformer would hum merrily along. If the laminates were loose the humming would be a buzz, but at least you knew something was happening. SWR? What was that? Those 6146's could care less. You just cured the TVI with a low pass filter and carried on. Want to heat the shack? Just go AM.

If something was going wrong in one of these behemoths, you could hear it snapping away inside. A more important event might be announced by a loud bang. An event of biblical proportions would be declared by a ear shattering pow, more than likely followed by sudden darkness and a voice from the other room saying "Honey! You put out the television again!" All in a days work.

Operating was also a discrete component of Amateur radio. You did all your own operating and the only help you might have is if one of your buddies or a sympathetic family member logged contacts for you. Even a "bug" was considered cheating by those of us who swore by, and often at, a hand key. But you did it yourself.

Ah. For the good old days.

Today it is a different game. Transistors and integrated circuits rule the world. In the same space normally taken up by a one watt resistor, an integrated circuit may have a million resistors, thousands of capacitors, diodes and transistors. The heat generating panel lights are often replaced by LED's or very small bulbs which are incredibly hard to find and replace. The only place you might find tubes is in the output circuit of the transmitter, and often as not it is the lovable 6146. High power amplifiers still use power tubes even if there are plenty of solid state devices around. Only here is the bang and pow of circuit failure to be found.

Thus the rub.

When a modern Amateur band rig has a bad day you will probably only notice that it just doesn't work anymore. A slight snap or pop might announce its demise but often as not the failure goes by unannounced if not completely discreet. The lights are still on but nobody is at home. Dare to open it up? I think not. The normal thing to do is to ask somebody else to look at it. That delegates responsibility to a third party who can render judgment with complete detachment. If they can't fix it then nobody can. They probably know as much about how to fix it as you do but in this case if the two of you agree that a problem exists and it is incurable, then the equipment is consigned to the back shelf as a project to be done in the next millennium, or to be sold on EBay as "Used Equipment" with the caveat "Buyer Beware". Of course it makes a good display piece or boor stop.

At the end of the day, the newer equipment ends up as a museum piece while the old clunkers go back on the desk because troubleshooting them is easier. A fried resistor in a DX-100 is easier to spot than the same component in a JA-Pan corporation "Whiz-Bang 6" tranceiver. If nothing else, your sense of smell will lead you to the cremated remains. If you can smell even that much from a "Whiz-Bang 6" then you should get out the fire extinguisher because this is just the start of the major event.

Once again, compare the station of the 60's with today's "mission control" station. Chances are the newer picture will have much more interesting stuff in it in comparison with the older shack. For one thing the computer is prominently displayed as part of the modern Ham shack. This little bit of technology is consigning the rest of our discrete operation to the proverbial bit bucket. The computer has taken over the station. At least the computers that you can see. The ones that you can't see have already insinuated themselves into our domain. They control your rig. They point your beam. They tune your antenna. Now they can also do the operating for you. Automatic logging for contests. It can check your country database to see if you have worked that EA8 before. It can predict the AMSAT equipment navigating the skys above us and can even point your antenna to it both vertical, horizontally and every other twist of the polarity cycle. It can detect and translate CW, RTTY, Packet, PSK, anything. Just tune it in, point the computer at it then sit back and enjoy.

This sort of thing makes the old appliance operator look like a deForest, a Marconi or a Rogers by comparison.

I miss the old days. I suppose I could search the swap shops and get myself equipped with some of the old reliable boat anchors but it seems hardly fair for me to bow out of today's technological breakthroughs just when it is getting interesting. To that end I went out and bought myself some JA-Pan corporation equipment, a digital connection to my computer and a bunch of connecting cables. I guess I can now say that I have passed the stage where "the bigger the better" is the axiom to the new stage where "the more complex the better" is now the way of the world.

Lets see where it goes. Oh! My computer just latched onto a funny sounding signal and is decoding it onto my screen in words that I can understand. Oooo! Now it has made contact with the signal and is playing back the pre-programmed conversation that I entered into the properties/setup screen in the program that came with the digital interface unit. Wow! The computer is tracking the signal just keeping it in place for decoding. Zowie! It is even closing the conversation, logging the contact, sending its pre-programmed digital QSL card to the other "station" using the Internet. And that's it! Wow!

I think I'll just leave the rig turned on all night. Maybe by the morning I'll have my DXCC! I guess I'll have to look at the logs to see who I contacted last night while I'm asleep.

Ain't technology wonderful!

Cary VE3EV

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL

Ottawa Amateur Radio Club, Inc.

Box 8873 Ottawa, Ontario K1G 3J2

Renewal New New Ham (FREE if licensed in current membership year)

Single (\$25 (\$20 after 1 Feb)) Family (\$30) Junior (\$15)

Add \$5.00 if you wish to have your Groundwave mailed to you.

(Please note: membership year is 1 September to 31 August)

Family Name: _____ First Name/Initials: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov: _____ Postal Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ ext _____

E-mail address: _____@_____ *(For Groundwave mailing)*

Callsign(s): | _____ | | _____ | | _____ | Fax: _____

Qualifications: Basic Advanced Grandfathered
 5 wpm 12 wpm Year Licenced: _____

Other Family Members

Name: _____ Callsign(s): | _____ | | _____ | | _____ |

Qualifications: Basic Advanced Grandfathered
 5 wpm 12 wpm Year Licenced: _____

Name: _____ Callsign(s): | _____ | | _____ | | _____ |

Qualifications: Basic Advanced Grandfathered
 5 wpm 12 wpm Year Licenced: _____

Name: _____ Callsign(s): | _____ | | _____ | | _____ |

Qualifications: Basic Advanced Grandfathered
 5 wpm 12 wpm Year Licenced: _____

Interests: _____

Comments/Suggestions: _____

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