

Ottawa Amateur Radio Club

Groundwave

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Check out our Web Page: www.oarc.net

Apr 2005

This month's Groundwave is a couple of weeks late as I was out of the country.

April's meeting is Homebrew Night so be sure to bring a project you worked on over the past year.

The executive is planning some upgrades to the VE2CRA re-peater including new controllers and possibly additional receiving sites. More details later.

Elections are coming up in June so now is the time to start thinking about running for the executive. June is also Field Day.

Club members should remember that if they have a capital project of general interest or benefit to amateur radio, they can apply to the executive for funding from the packet fund.

On a personal note I managed to make my first satellite contact on FM via Oscar Echo, AO-51. I used a HT and Arrow antenna. The contact was with VE3DIJ way over in Nepean! I wondered for a while if I might be hearing him direct rather than via satellite.

Editor



APRIL MEETING 19:30, April 13th in the Honeywell Room at Ottawa City Hall

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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 three days after the regular monthly meeting of the OARC.

Please support your local radio organisations. They support you!

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**, (roll calls after net on 50.150, 432.150, 222.150, and 1296.100). Horizontal polarization is preferred.

The Ottawa Amateur Radio Club bulletin "Groundwave" is published and distributed to club members by email and 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 in July and August. 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

VE3TVA 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.



Dates to Remember

Minutes of the March Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 by the President, Diane Bruce (VA3DB). We had a number of guests who are hoping to become hams one day: Jeff Roberts, Geoff Oakham, Robert Montreuil and Tom Trottier whose father Leo was VE3EQT. We were pleased to have a repeat visit from Frank Kliiger (VA6ALF and K9ALF).

It was unanimously agreed that the minutes of the February meeting were accurate.

Ernie Brown (VA3OEB) gave a fascinating talk about his experiences as a Second Radio Officer on the Holland America Line from April to October of 1941. His ship sailed with the convoys of allied merchant vessels during the Battle of the Atlantic. He survived being torpedoed twice. When that happened it was his job to sink the code books and get the emergency radio kit into the Captain's lifeboat. It was a privilege to hear a war story from someone who experienced it first hand. Ernie reminded all present that there will be a memorial service to honour sailors lost at sea, and to mark the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War on May 8 of this year at the War Memorial in downtown Ottawa.

After coffee, Richard Hagemeyer (VE3UNW) gave us a slide show of amateurs in action at this year's Canadian Ski Marathon. Amateurs have been involved in the Marathon since 1974, providing radio communications over 160 kms of trail. Almost all of the terrain is beyond the reach of cellphones and even satellite phones. Over the years, 300 hams have accumulated over 400 years of combined CSM service. Thanks Richard for all the work you do to make the Marathon such a fun and successful event for both amateurs and Marathon organizers.

A lucky Gordon Phillips (VE3XGP) made away with \$22.50 from the 50/50 draw.

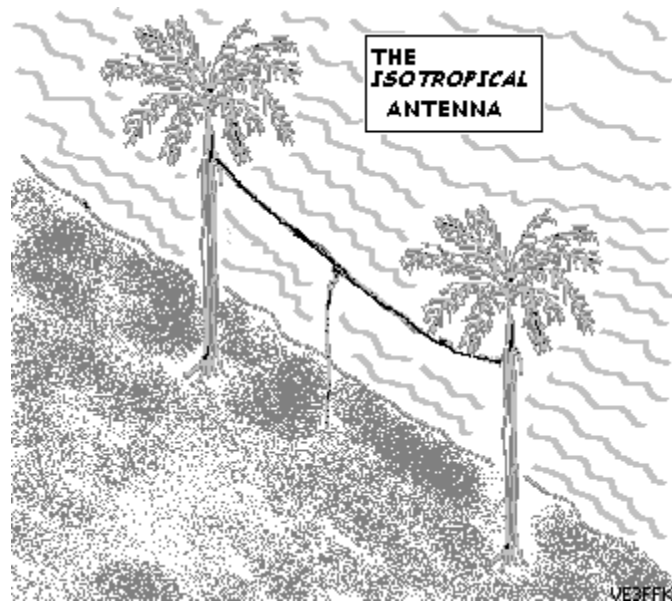
Members were reminded that April's meeting will be Home Brew night—so bring your creative handiwork and show it off. Entrants will be judged and the win-

2005

February 12,13	Canadian Ski Marathon
April 13	Homebrew Night
June 8	OARC Annual General Meeting & Elections
June 25,26	Field Day
July 1	RAC Canada Day Contest
September 3	OARC Hamfest
September 30	Membership Renewal Deadline
November 9	Joe Norton Award Submission Deadline
December 17	RAC Winter Contest

ner will be presented an engraved plaque at the May meeting. The meeting will be held on April 13 at 7:30 pm in the Honeywell Room of City Hall.

Janice Neelands





Mk's Words

The New NVIS?

Those of you who have been keeping up to date on things have heard of NVIS, Near Vertical Incidence Skywave. Essentially it is the practice of spraying your RF straight up onto the underside of the ionosphere, and waiting for it to land back down around you. The whole idea is to allow good HF communications with nearby (within 300 km or so) stations. It is a bit like putting a flood light on the coffee table in the living room so you can light up that space behind the corner chair. While this works in the living room, it has its drawbacks when applied to the RF world. The ionosphere doesn't always reflect the frequency you want to use. Sometimes the D layer absorbs so much of your signal that there is nothing left by the time you go up and back. Now there is a way to get around this.

The idea started back in 1960 with project Echo, a big reflecting sphere in space. Aircraft scatter has been used for a long time on VHF to cover a few adjacent grid squares. All this is dandy for those little waves, where even a wimpy scrap of an antenna will let you squirt all your power into a tiny section of space, but it leaves the HF gang out of the game. The idea came to me all at once, after hearing from my buddies on the Easter coast about how the fish are all gone, and these huge fishing nets are doing nothing these days. At the same time those guys selling cheap air tickets went bust. That ought to leave a mess of airplanes sitting around doing nothing too.

First you take a whole mess of aluminum foil, cut the rolls into slices, so you have a bunch of rolls like hockey tape, only made of aluminum. Then unroll 'em and weave the aluminum into the nets, so they will reflect RF better. (I betcha you can see where this is going.) Now hook the nets up to the airplanes, just like they were those flying banners sayin' come to the casino, or some such.

Then you just launch the planes with a couple of wavelengths of net behind them, and keep enough of 'em in the air to do the job. You can even carry passengers if

they don't mind flying in circles for a few hours before they land. (Don't they do that anyway?) It may be a slow trip, but it could still be cheaper for them than the train, since they are just along for the ride. There are still lots of holes between the airplanes to let RF get up to the real ionosphere too, in case somebody still wants to use it. After over a hundred years, it must be getting pretty tired by now. Let's give it a break.

Yes, it would be expensive to keep those planes all up in the sky all the time, but since folks keep telling me how valuable our spectrum is, maybe some of the other neighbours on the bands could put up some of the cost too. Everybody from aircraft and marine folks to the short wave religious broadcasters will be beating a path to our door to pay for this "virtual ionosphere". That reminds me, I already have a name for this new propagation mode: Enhanced Linear Virtual Ionosphere System.

Perhaps we will have some real ELVIS sightings before the next April Fool's Day.

73.. mk

Report on National Antenna Tower Policy Review Now Available on RAC Website.

Industry Canada has announced the release of the Report on the National Antenna Tower Policy Review. This review was led by Professor David A. Townsend, Professor of Law at the University of New Brunswick, with the support and assistance of the National Antenna Tower Review Advisory Committee. Input for this study was received from Radio Amateurs of Canada, as well as numerous Amateur Operators across Canada. For more information and pointers to sites where the documents can be found, please visit the RAC Website and click on Latest News.



Debbie Norman, VA3RGM

General Manager

Radio Amateurs of Canada Inc.



Merchant Navy Sparks

Recollections of Ernie Brown [va3oeb@rac.ca]

I was surprised and pleased at the interest shown in my presentation on the Battle of Atlantic at the March meeting of the OARC. What I was able to tell in the time available was part of the story. I plan to write the full story to share with our members, through the Groundwave, for those interested. It is the story of one radio operator, who for a limited time, was in the midst of The Battle of the Atlantic. My purpose is to remind us all of the dedication of our Naval crews, our Merchant Navy crews, and the crews of the Allied Merchant Ships, which carried the necessary supplies and equipment to the places where they were needed, in the face of the enemy efforts to cut off all supplies.

The Wireless Operator, or Radio Operator, usually known as 'Sparks' in the Merchant Navy, was one of many occupations serving in every Branch of the Armed Services – Army, Navy and Air Force, the Ferry Command, and the Merchant Navy. This year of 2005, the 60th Anniversary of the end of WWII, we remember all Veterans, of all Services, whose lives were changed forever through their experiences. We remember especially all those who gave their lives in the long struggle. The Annual Memorial Service for RCN and MN Veterans is held on the first Sunday of May, at the Cenotaph, at Elgin and Wellington Streets. This account is dedicated to the memory of the sailors lost at sea, during the war years.

After graduating from High School in 1939, I had begun training as a Radio Operator with Canadian Electronics Institute in Toronto. With some time out for my share of farm work, I was ready to try the Department of Transport exam for my 2nd Class Radio Operator Certificate in March 1941. We had studied the theory of radio and the typical receiver and transmitter circuits of the time. Operating procedures based upon the British Postmaster General's Handbook had to be memorized including commercial message counting and charging. We had also learned to send and copy Morse code at 20 wpm, if memory is reliable.

We were told that merchant ships were in need of many radio operators to enable continuous watch keeping in the radio rooms of ships sailing in convoy. We were asked if we would volunteer to go "deep sea". Five of us in the group of about 20, volunteered. Following the test, we learned that five of us had passed! Do you suppose there was a message there?

I was given a train ticket to New York, and told to report to the offices of the Holland America Line in Hoboken, NJ. I reported there March 31, 1941, and was assigned to the Steam Ship MAASDAM, a 10,000-ton freighter, with 16 cabins for passengers. My Radio Operator Certificate was mailed directly to the shipping company, and delivered to me aboard the SS MAASDAM. I was signed on the ship's payroll April 1st. Loading of cargo was just being completed, and 32 passengers came aboard. We sailed April 2nd.

A description of the layout of the freighter will clarify some events to be described. My cabin was with the deck officers on the second level of the forward deck house, where the captain occupied the third level, and the bridge was the top deck. The main deck level was the dining saloon. There were two cargo hatches forward of the bridge, hatch number 3 between the bridge and the mid-ships deck house, where the passenger cabins were on the second deck level, the galley and the crew quarters being on the main deck level. The engine room was below decks, and the radio room was on the second level in the after end of this deck house with the chief operator's cabin beside it. Hatches four and five were on the after deck of the ship. When fully loaded, there were two army trucks tied down on each of hatch covers one and two, and on four and five. Whenever I went on duty to the radio room, or returned to my cabin or to the dining saloon, it was necessary to cross the open deck by hatch number 3. When the ship is pitching and rolling in rough seas, wave crests would splash over the rail of the forward deck, as well as into the space of hatch number three.

Sailing up to Halifax in good weather, the motion of the ship was getting to me, but not to the point of being seasick. We reached Halifax April 4th and an-



Airline Humour

chored in Bedford Basin. Convoy HX 119 formed up on April 6th and headed northeast. Now in the open sea, the motion was more pronounced, and this landlubber had to gain his sea legs. I was to find that seasickness would prevail about the first three days out, then I would be okay, except in the very roughest weather. One very important lesson that this landlubber learned, was that when you are seasick, do not head for the windward rail!

Another lesson was emphasized with a very cold and unexpected shower, when I was crossing the deck by hatch number three, on my way to go on watch. I did not wait to check the wave action! After that, I always paused to check the waves, and if necessary, wait for a wave to splash inboard, before proceeding.

Watch keeping was shared with the chief operator in six-hour shifts. So we were either on watch, eating, or sleeping at any given time, though there was time to stand in the lee of the deck house to marvel at the waves. In rough weather one would see only water for a moment, then only sky, as the ship rolled and pitched through the large waves. On watch, we listened on 500 kcs [Hz] and copied all messages heard. All signals were CW, and the messages in code groups. Messages we were looking for came from British Admiralty, and we would decode the preamble to see if it was intended for our ship, such as "All Eastbound Convoys". If so we passed the message on to the bridge where the deck officers decoded the text. The receiver was a three tube regenerative set, with the regeneration backed off to zero. Any advance of the regeneration could emit a signal that could be detected by the enemy. The emergency receiver was a crystal detector built into the receiver and using the same tuning coils. The transmitter was sealed, so I did not learn anything about it. There was also an emergency spark-gap transmitter, which was not to be used. There was a Telefunken Auto Alarm receiver, which was not used since we kept continuous watch. The hand key was a heavy brass key, bolted to the desk with the knob at the edge of the desk. Keying was done with arm floating – of course we did not send any messages, but I did practice my code sending just with the key, until the chief told me how many mistakes I had made – he was supposed to be asleep in the cabin beside the radio room.

To be continued.

After every flight, Qantas pilots fill out a form, called a "gripe sheet" to tell mechanics about problems with the aircraft. The mechanics correct the problems, document their repairs on the form, and then pilots review the gripe sheets before the next flight. Never let it be said that ground crews lack a sense of humor. Here are some actual maintenance complaints submitted by Qantas' pilots (marked with a P) and the solutions recorded (marked with an S) by maintenance engineers.

P: Left inside main tire almost needs replacement
S: Almost replaced left inside main tire.

P: Test flight OK, except auto-land very rough.
S: Auto-land not installed on this aircraft.

P: Something loose in cockpit.
S: Something tightened in cockpit.

P: Dead bugs on windshield.
S: Live bugs on back-order.

P: Evidence of leak on right main landing gear.
S: Evidence removed.

P: DME volume unbelievably loud.
S: DME volume set to more believable level.

P: Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick.
S: That's what they're for.

P: Suspected crack in windshield.
S: Suspect you're right.

P: Number 3 engine missing.
S: Engine found on right wing after brief search.

P: Aircraft handles funny.
S: Aircraft warned to straighten up, fly right, and be serious.

P: Target radar hums.
S: Reprogrammed target radar with lyrics.

P: Mouse in cockpit.
S: Cat installed.

P: Noise coming from under instrument panel. Sounds like a midget pounding on something with a hammer.
S: Took hammer away from midget.

KENWOOD

TS-480HX/TS-480SAT

HF/50MHz All-Mode Transceiver

KENWOOD
NETWORK COMMAND SYSTEM
with Voice over Internet Protocol capability



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