

THE OVMRC RAMBLER

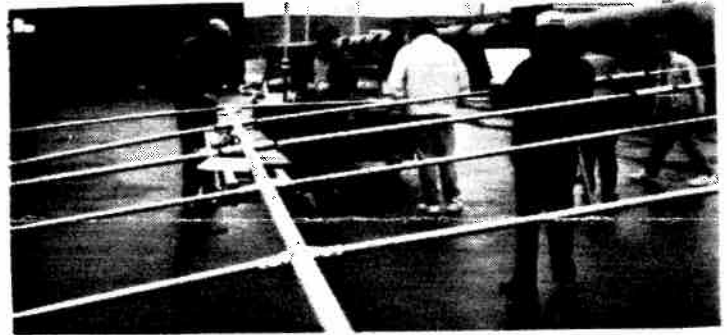
Volume 39, Number 5 - December, 1994

VE3JW Is On The Beam !

Written By Jerry Wells, VE3CDS

With the advent of the usual cold, wet weather in the early days of November we, nonetheless, undertook to assemble and install our new model TH7DX Super Thunderbird HF antenna on the 48 foot tower at the Museum of Science and Technology. We certainly lucked out insofar as the weather was concerned as it was very mild and the rain ceased during those periods when we were assembling the 705 individual parts that make up the antenna. Fifteen Club members took part in the project. Assembly started on Friday morning at 9:00 am. The group was divided into teams, each with assigned responsibility to assemble specific elements and attach them to the 24 foot boom. Everyone worked diligently and checked each others work, specifically the length and placement of the elements. Final assembly with the antenna mounted on the centre support pipe was completed by 2:00pm on Friday afternoon. Mounting the 75 pound antenna on top of the tower was done Saturday morning using a hydraulic aerial platform. The antenna, located on the south side of the museum, looks pretty spectacular up on top of the tower. The photos of this project give some idea of the magnitude of the task. The following hams comprised the assembly and installation team - Maurice-Andre, VE3VIG, Tom, VA3OFD, Cy, VE3SIY, Garry, VE3UFH, Rick, VE3IHI, Paul, VE3IPB, Rob, VE3SJM, Archie, VE3NJY, Len, VE3LGZ, President Ernie, VE3EJJ, Roger (our Rigger) VE3XRR, Bill, VE3BDK and Ron, VE3UWR.

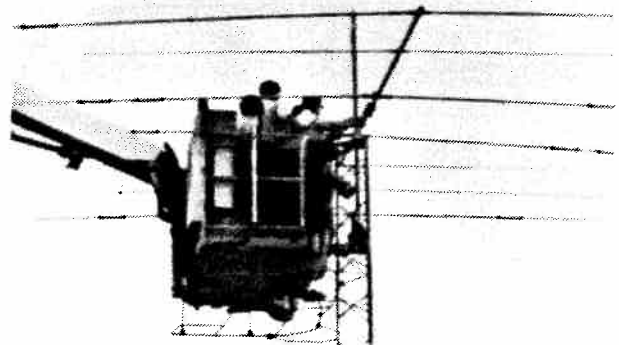
I am proud to say I was very pleased with the efforts of all of the members of the team, it was an outstanding job which was exceptionally well done !



An energetic group of assemblers putting the 704 antenna parts together.



Rick, VE3IHI, explains the phasing assembly on the antenna to partially shown Paul, VE3IPB. Maurice-Andre, VE3VIG, is in the background tightening a connector.



Part of the work crew "up in the air" on the hydraulic platform at the top of the tower installing the antenna in the rotor.

The Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club

RAMBLER

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744-6672

Newsletter: Dan Doctor, VE3XDD,
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Publicity & Programs: Larry Wilcox,
VE3WEH, 747-5565

Radio Operations: Jacques Choquette,
VE3TSC, 748-6597

Technical: Rick Furniss, VE3IHI,
224-2604

Ramblerites

Contributors to this issue:

Jerry Wells, VE3CDS

Doug Bannard, VE3SPF

OVMRC Code Phone - 746-2065

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Corel Corporation in producing the Rambler.

Mark Your Calendar !

Next general meeting:

Thursday, December 15th at 1930 hours in the main auditorium of the Museum of Science and Technology. This will be our Christmas Social and Mini Soap Box Night - a fun time for all !

Deadline for next Rambler:

Friday, December 23rd, 1994.

OVMRC's Repeater:

**VE3TWO , 147.300MHz (+)
444.200MHz (+)**

Affiliated Clubs

The OVMRC exchanges newsletters with the following organizations:

Algoma ARC, Sault Ste Marie, ON
Augusta Amateur Radio Assoc. Augusta, ME
Border City Radio Club, Windsor, ON
Chatham-Kent ARC Inc. Chatham, ON
Calgary Amateur Radio Assoc. Calgary AB
Comox Valley ARC, Comox, B.C.
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Thousand Island ARC, Brockville, ON
West Island ARC, Dorval, PQ
Winnipeg ARC, Winnipeg, MAN

Sponsors

The OVMRC provides newsletters to the following organizations for their past support of our activities:

Bytown Marine, Ottawa, ON
Kenwood Electronics Canada Inc.
Mississauga, ON
Corel Corporation, Ottawa, ON

From all of us...



to all of you

*A Very Merry Christmas
and
A Happy New Year, 1995*



Ramblings

Wise words from our President,

Ernie Jury, VE3EJJ



At this most joyous time of year, I would like to extend to all our associates and friends the wish for a "Very Merry Christmas" and a "Safe, Happy and Healthy New Year".

I need not tell you that the Club's Technical Chairperson, Rick Furniss has been one of the busiest executive members since assuming office. I have agreed to give this month's column to Rick to tell his own story - so take it away Rick !

Here it is almost Christmas and we've already received our gift - way back in the fall. Yes, I'm referring to our crossband repeater. I have received many thanks both for my role as well as that of those who so ably assisted in this project. We all would like to say, " You are most welcome, we had fun doing it !" While the installation was not without challenges or technical glitches it did go rather smoothly. We did, however, find that we had a faulty power supply which will have been replaced by the time you read this. The normal Murphyisms found us as they find everyone, for example, you build a circuit on a bread board, test it in the circuit, move everything to a perf board, install it in the circuit, close up 3 rf tight boxes with 30 screws, then find out that it won't work because of one little solder joint that you forgot to make on the perf board. However, all is well that ends well and I believe we are at the end of the installation stage and all is well.

As I went along in the installation a number of choices had to be made regarding the parts being worked on. The location of radios, organization of the radio rack, cabling for power and rf, heat management and antenna considerations are all things that are set during the construction phase and pretty much stay as they are because the right way is the way that works without a failure. The control board is not in this group

as it can be changed after it is installed. The controller now in place is very flexible and has over 100 values that can be changed. In setting up the controller I made the choices that would give the repeater it's "personality", how it behaves, how much it talks, the timers... all 14 of them and so on. Some of the values I picked were not good, like a 3 minute rotating ID that hardly let you get a word in edgewise. It was changed very quickly ! Some were picked in order to keep the repeater legal and are cut and dried, you must give the complete call sign no less than every 30 minutes, no room for change there. The point of all of this is to bring to your attention that while some group opinions are very clear, "Make it talk less" comes to mind, others are not. If you think the repeater is set up just right I want to hear from you, no news is only an assumption of good news in this case, and if you think the repeater is not functioning properly I also want to hear from you. The only thing I ask is that you consider the impact of your request on the other couple of hundred people who will have to listen to it. One of the things that was made clear in the member survey was a desire to upgrade your skills. A more perfect opportunity would be hard to find than this, an advance class licence course will be starting in January. It costs nothing and with a great deal of knowledge to be gained it surprises me that less than 10 people per year show up for the class- it should be double. You will not find a better way to spend your Tuesday evenings with Richard VE3UNW and Mike VE3FFK and a group of people you know finding out how much you already know about amateur radio.

Merry Christmas everyone and keep on using and enjoying our early Christmas gift in 1995 !

Minutes

OVMRC Regular Meeting 17 November, 1994

The meeting was called to order by President Ernie, VE3EJJ, at 1932 hours.

The membership welcomed two new members, Robert and Vincent.

Jake, VE2TQX, is looking for a communication receiver, preferably solid state, for approximately \$300. Darren, VA3EKB, is interested in satellite communication and would like some tutoring. Jacques, VE3VIA, our guest speaker offered to meet with him after the meeting.

Larry, VE3WEH, introduced the guest speaker for the evening - Jacques D'Avignon, VE3VIA, who travelled from his home in Kingston to be with the Club tonight.

Jacques, who has been an avid SWL since '39, gave an enlightening and most interesting presentation on Propagation Forecasting. He made his presentation both informative and entertaining with the use of overhead slides to illustrate the various levels of propagation (signal bounce) and relating personal experiences. Jacques presentation was followed by a questions and answers session which confirmed the memberships interest in Jacques' subject.

Jerry, VE3CDS, speaking on behalf of the Club, thanked Jacques for his excellent presentation.

Announcements:

There have been a number of copies of the Rambler returned by the post office marked "moved, address unknown". Any member not receiving his copy of the Rambler is asked to check with Dan Doctor, the Rambler Editor. There is a letter/petition at the registration table regarding EMCAB2. Thanks to Ralph, VE3BBM, for his assistance in drafting this letter. Members are urged to sign this protest letter in support of our hobby.

Jerry, VE3CDS, is looking for volunteers to help with the "Talk to Santa Claus" event at the Museum of Science and Technology on Sundays, December 11 and 18. Bilingual operators with an HT would be helpful.

The museum station, VE3JW, is scheduled to open at the end of January, 1995. The new beam antenna has been erected and is ready for operation. Volunteers are needed to operate the station every Sunday morning. The CW course will begin Monday night at the museum. It is an opportunity for those operators with a Basic Licence to start qualifying for 5 wpm or 12 wpm.

Ken, VE3KJB, Flea Market Chairperson, has confirmed that the Club's Flea Market will be held May 13th at the McNabb Arena, 180 Percy Street. Ken is looking for volunteers to help with this major project. Anyone wanting a table at the Flea Market is advised to reserve early as Ken already has 30 tables reserved and space is limited.

Bob, VE3SUY, confirmed that the PC Board workshop is on Sunday morning at 9:30. Fifteen members have indicated that they will be attending the workshop. There is still some room for anyone wishing to participate - see Bob after the meeting.

Larry, VE3WEH, is looking for members as speakers for our Mini Soap Box Speakers Night next month. The meeting will include a special social period. Lillian, our Social Convenor, is looking for members to bring a plate of home-baked goodies to go with the tea and coffee.

Larry, VE3WEH, is once again offering to put on a Defensive Driving Course if there are enough members interested. Interested members are asked to contact Larry.

Ron, VE3UWR, had the guest speaker make the draw for the door prizes. Bob, VA3RJR, won a \$25 gift certificate and Richard, VE3UNW, won an EEM catalogue set. Congratulations to our two winners!

The meeting was adjourned at 2124 hours and was followed by a social hour with tea, coffee and cookies.

Shuttle Snooping

The Goddard Amateur Radio Club invites interested people to tune into Space Shuttle ground communication transmissions the club retransmits as a public service to all amateurs.

During Shuttle missions, hams, shortwave listeners, and folks with scanners can listen in on the following frequencies:

- 3.860 MHz (lower sideband)
- 7.186 MHz (lower sideband)
- 14.295 MHz (upper sideband)
- 21.395 MHz (upper sideband)
- 28.650 MHz (upper sideband)
- 147.45 MHz (FM)

Gratis Solar Action Reports

We have been asked by a number of amateurs to repeat this item which first appeared in the March, 1994, edition of the Rambler.

Energy, Mines and Resources Canada, Geophysics Division, studies solar activities from its Algonquin Park facilities and prepares regular reports which are available to the public free of charge. Persons requesting these reports will receive a review of geomagnetic activity affecting the polar cap, auroral, and sub-auroral zones for the period as well as a prediction of activity for the next period. Seventy-two hour forecasts are also available by calling (613) 992-1299 in Ottawa for a recorded message or you can call direct for further information on the services available at (613)837-3527.

FM Amateur Satellites

Reprint from Windsor Border City Radio Club

Of the 18 available amateur satellites presently in orbit, four offer, at various times, transponders for general use. Two of these, AO-21 and AO-27 operate on 2 meters and 70 centimetres. Being low earth orbit satellites, both are overhead for short periods, usually ten to fifteen minutes per

pass. There are about six passes a day, three between morning and mid-day and three at night.

OSCAR-21, or AO-21, has a unique repeater that lets you input on 435.016 and output on 145.987. To copy, tune 145.990 or 145.985. When you listen for AO-21 you will soon notice that at the first part of the pass you can hear it better on 145.990, then as the pass progresses you can hear it better on 145.985. All you really need to listen is a rubber-duckie equipped handheld.

COMSONT Net Is On The Move

The COMSONT Net which has operated daily for the past sixteen and a half years on various frequencies below 7.1 MHz in the 10 meter band is again on the move. The nets current frequency of 7.084 MHz suffers the same QRM frustrations which have prompted previous frequency changes.

W. R. Campbell, VE3KLL, COMSONT Manager has advised that as of December 1, 1994, the net will relocate its daily operation as an emergency response network to 7.152 MHz at 10:00 hours EST. with a brief "pre-net" commencing at 0945 hours.

What Goodies Are You Bringing ?

The OVMRC's December 15 meeting will be our Christmas Social - an opportunity for all members to socialize, get to talk to one another and enjoy tea, coffee and baked goodies. As in past years it would be appreciated if members brought a plate of home baked goods - cookies, baked squares, cake, muffins, etc. with which our "Social Convenor" Lillian Getkate could decorate a "goodies" table. In an effort to ensure a variety of treats and avoid everyone bringing the same thing, you are requested to telephone Lillian at 727 - 3805 to confirm what it is you will be bringing to the Social.

Part 4

Rechargeable Batteries

Summary of a talk given by Doug Bannard, VE3SPF

The Care and Feeding of Car/Marine Batteries in the Shack - A Few Myths

Much of the amateur radio equipment sold today is designed to be operated from a nominal voltage of 13.8 volts DC, rather than the traditional 120 volts AC used when vacuum tube equipment was more prevalent. Since regulated 13.8 volt power supplies capable of supplying the 10-20 amps required by some mobile VHF rigs and most HF rigs are quite expensive, it seems attractive to invest instead in a car or marine battery and a charger.

Some hams have had years of good service out of their batteries using such a set-up, while many others have ended up with a battery which will no longer hold a charge in two years or less. Yet the battery would have lasted 4-5 years in a car. What gives? Let's have a look.

Car and marine batteries are lead-acid batteries. That is, they contain plates made from a lead alloy, coated with an active material which is also a lead compound. The battery also contains an "electrolyte", a mixture of sulphuric acid and water. During the process of charging the battery, a chemical reaction takes place between the electrolyte and the active material on the battery plates which enables the battery to convert electrical energy to stored chemical energy. When a battery is discharged, the chemical energy is converted to electrical energy by means of a second chemical reaction. I'm not attempting to explain the reactions which take place - but we need the foregoing information as background.

What causes lead-acid batteries to fail prematurely?

1) High Temperatures:

These batteries age quickly at elevated temperatures. High temperatures can be due to the battery's surroundings (such as the

car's hood), or due to excessive current being used to charge the battery. Even an electrolyte temperature of 50 degrees C severely shortens battery life.

2) Overcharging:

An attempt to charge a battery at too high a current shortens its life by either overheating it, or by destroying the active material on the positive plate.

3) Infrequent Charging or Undercharging:

If a battery is chronically undercharged, or even worse is stored for more than a month without being charged it will tend to start self-discharging. When it does so, it forms hard lead sulphate deposits around the active material on its plates. This renders the battery useless - no longer able to accept or hold a charge - permanently.

4) Lack of Maintenance:

If the tops of the plates become exposed to the air due to the electrolyte level not being maintained, a permanent loss of battery capacity occurs.

5) Misapplication:

Car batteries are just that - for starting cars. They also make fine back-up power for the shack as long as you don't "deep-cycle" them - that is they do not like being discharged until "flat", then recharged repeatedly (as with a field-day battery, for example). If you intend to discharge a battery until it is flat then buy a deep cycle marine battery.

The Myths

1) Just Buy a Battery Charger:

The ham who buys a car battery and an automotive charger to re-charge it after he has finished operating may not have a serviceable battery for very long. As was previously explained, a battery's state of charge is very important in determining its lifetime. Unfortunately, almost all automotive chargers are designed to just get a dead battery back into service (on an occasional

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Rechargeable Batteries

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basis), and don't ensure that it's neither under or overcharged. Furthermore, these chargers use pulsating DC to charge the battery, causing a large ripple current to flow in the battery, hastening the destruction of the active material on the battery plates. The use of automotive chargers regularly is the number 1 cause of early battery failure, and even the small 1A to 2A chargers available for trickle charging can produce enough ripple current to seriously harm a battery.

2) Use the Battery as a Filter:

Worse still is the ham that buys an automotive charger, puts it in parallel with the battery and leaves it turned on for hours on end while operating, using the battery as a ripple filter. This causes the same problems as in (1) above.

3) Add New Electrolyte:

Never add commercially available electrolyte to a car battery. If the electrolyte level is low in any of the cells, top them up with DISTILLED WATER (NOT TAP WATER). A battery which will no longer hold a charge CANNOT be rejuvenated by dumping out the old electrolyte and replacing it with new fluid. So take it easy on your wallet and the environment - if your battery will no longer hold a charge it cannot be rejuvenated by any reasonable means. Take it back to where you bought it to be recycled.

4) Use the Battery from the Car You Junked:

Maybe you've scrapped a car recently that had a relatively good battery in it - and saved the battery. If you've let the old battery sit however for more than a month or so without charging it, it will be so badly sulphated due to self-discharge that it will have very little capacity and will probably let you down in an emergency situation. In other words...KEEP THAT BATTERY CHARGED !

5) Get a Maintenance Free Battery

There are three different types of lead-acid batteries you will run into.

i) The battery with the filler caps: usually the lowest cost and good for our application as it allows us to add water as necessary.

ii) The "maintenance free": It's the same as above except that you can't add water - no

filler caps. More expensive and of no real advantage in a ham shack. These do use water contrary to popular belief, and mechanics often take them apart to add distilled water to extend their lives !

iii) The "immobilized electrolyte" battery (one trade name is GEL-CEL): These are the Cadillac of lead-acids. The electrolyte is absorbed in porous separators between the plates, and cannot spill. The plate chemistry is slightly different so that no hydrogen is produced during charging (the source of electrolyte loss). The most expensive of all, this battery is very tolerant of storage and can be stored for a year or more in a charged state without worry of self-discharge or sulphation and loss of capacity. These are available in all sizes, a 100 amp-hour unit selling for approximately \$300.

Now, What to do?

I've covered the most commonly heard myths. Now, here is what you should do if you want that battery to last up to ten years.

a) Make sure that you choose a big enough battery for your intended application. If you are going to want to use the battery for field day, for example, and will want to draw 5 amps for 20 hours, then you will need a 100 amp-hour battery. If it's only for periodic backup in the shack, a 50-60 amp-hour unit is more than enough.

b) Build yourself the analog expanded scale voltmeter on page 52 of the December, 1992 issue of QST, or buy yourself an inexpensive digital multimeter. You need a means of monitoring the terminal voltage of your battery accurately.

c) If you have a 13.8 volt DC power supply for your shack that is regulated and current-limited, this is what you should be using to charge the battery. It can actually be quite a low current supply (you can build your own with an LM317 regulator and a few other parts from a well stocked junk box) if you are not worried about recharging the battery very quickly.

d) Connect the power supply in parallel with the battery through a diode which has a

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Rechargeable Batteries

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current rating of at least the output current of your power supply. If the diode is connected in the positive lead between the power supply and the battery then the anode is connected to the power supply positive and the cathode to the battery negative. This diode prevents current from the battery from flowing into the power supply when the supply is turned off (or during a power outage) , preventing both power supply damage and battery discharge. Whatever rigs you are using should be wired directly across the battery terminals (watch the polarity), and your voltmeter must be connected directly across these terminals as well. Don't forget to make sure the leads going to the rigs have appropriate sized fuses in them. You should also use a 1.0 amp fuse in one voltmeter lead just to prevent accidents in case of a short circuit at the voltmeter.

e) Now adjust the output voltage of your power supply (you may have to remove a cover) very slowly until the voltmeter reads 13.8 volts DC to within 0.1 volts. It will take some time to make this adjustment correctly, as a battery which isn't completely charged will tend to make your power supply current limit and drop its voltage. Don't forget - batteries produce hydrogen when they are almost fully charged. Although the amount produced at a terminal voltage of 13.8 volts is small, it is still present. For this reason, do not enclose the battery, and beware of sparks and open lights around it while it is charging.

f) Now you're ready to go. Now key the rig. If your power supply is on the wimpy side, you will notice the voltmeter drop from 13.8 volts to somewhere between 12 and 13 volts. There will be less voltage drop with larger power supplies. Now, operate as much as you want. For those with small power supplies, however, the battery voltage will continue dropping the longer your operating session. When your voltmeter reads 11.0 volts - stop operating - your battery has discharged as much as it can do without damage. Shut down your rig at this point and leave the power supply on for several

hours - until the voltmeter reads 13.8 volts - then a few hours longer to ensure a full charge.

g) You do not have to leave the power supply turned on all the time. If you wish, it can be disconnected after the battery is fully charged. In fact, the battery will last longer if it is not continually "floated" at 13.8 volts. You can take the battery out on field day (with the voltmeter of course). Just remember to charge it once every three weeks as a minimum with the power supply even if you're not using it. And buy some distilled water at the drugstore to keep its fluid levels topped up. And above all ... have fun !

EDITORS NOTE;

This is the concluding part of the series on Rechargeable Batteries, a summary of a talk given by Doug Bannard. The Rambler, again wishes to thank Doug for his permission to reprint this very informative series. We hope you have found this series helpful in your understanding of and the methods of caring for rechargeable batteries. Should you have any questions about lead-acid or NiCad batteries, please feel free to pass them along to the Rambler and we will arrange to have Doug provide you with an answer.

CW Is Universal

An American woman and two Japanese boys went into the Amateur Radio Station at the Museum of Science and Technology in Tampa, Florida. The woman, the boys' tour guide, told the operators they wouldn't be able to speak to the boys because they did not speak English. Then she explained that the boys were ham operators. Hearing that, one operator tapped out "CQ CQ" and the boys instantly tapped back an answer. After that the operator translated for the tour guide. The guide was astounded until it was explained that regardless of native language, using Morse code, with its standard abbreviations, is an universale language understood by all hams.

OVMRC Planning Calendar of Events

December 15th, 1994

General meeting. This will be our Christmas Social and Members' Surprise Mini Soap Box Night. A "fun" evening for all ! Volunteer speakers are asked to contact Larry Wilcox, VE3WEH, to reserve a spot on the soap box.

December 11 & 18, 1994

It's "childrens talk to Santa Claus " time at the Museum of Science and Technology. Volunteers are required who relate easily to kids and who have a HT to facilitate these conversations.

December 25th, 1994

Its the annual "special Christmas Morning Wise Owl Net" with Sidney, VE3VGI, as Net Control. Its your opportunity to exchange Christmas greetings with other amateurs.

January, 1995

Its the HT AC power supply building party. Wil Warren, VE3XMT, will be holding the second of the building workshops to build the CSA approved power supply. To reserve a spot at the work bench contact Jacques Choquette, VE3TSC.

January 19th, 1995

General meeting. Our guest speaker will be Jim Dean, VE3IQ, Vice President of RAC. With the number of changes pending in amateur radio in Canada, this should be an extremely interesting presentation.

February 16th, 1995

General meeting. "The Newest In Computer Software". We are attempting to arrange what could be the outstanding presentation of the year with Corel Corporation.

February, 1995

The permanent facility for Station VE3JW is scheduled for completion and will be officially opened at the Museum of Science and Technology.

March 16th, 1995

General meeting . Get ready !!! March will be Home Brew Night - so get all your "special" gizmos ready. Valuable prizes will be awarded.

April 20th, 1995

General meeting. A long time in coming but here it is - "Packet/Internet Night" . A panel of experts is being invited to make a joint presentation on this extremely interesting subject.

May 13th, 1995

The OVMRC Flea Market, to be held at the McNabb Arena, Percy Street. Ken Barry, VE3KJB, reports that he already has 30 vendors booked for the flea market. If you're planning to have a table at the flea market - better reserve early with Ken.

May 18th, 1995

General meeting. A very special night, featuring " CW Brass Pounders" and guest speaker Gerry King. This is one meeting you will not want to miss.

June 15th, 1995

General meeting. Its election night - time to elect your executive officers for 1995-1996.

June, 1995

Two special weekends upcoming this month for amateur operators at all levels - Techno Days at the Museum of Science and Technology and, of course, Field Days. Plan now to participate in these two "hands on" events.

Xmas Morning Wise Owl Net

Net Controller Sidney, VE3VGI, will be inviting your check in on the very special Christmas morning Wise Owl Net on the OVMRC's repeater VE3TWO starting at 9:30am. Inasmuch as Christmas fall on a Sunday this year many amateurs will want to attend church services so better check in early and extend festive greetings to your friends before they go off to church. This annual edition of the Wise Owl Net is a tradition the OVMRC is pleased to maintain for its members and local amateurs.

Amateurs Can Get A Break

If you have been searching for a reliable local source to have your QSL cards produced at the reasonable cost - read on! PRO Printers, located in the strip plaza at St. Laurent Blvd. and Belfast Road, about one quarter of a mile east of the Museum of Science and Technology, will typeset your text, scan your artwork and produce an attractive custom QSL card for you. And you'll have a choice of coloured card. Best of all, if you mention you heard about them in the Rambler you'll receive a ten percent discount.

An Invitation To Use New BBS

There is a new BBS available in the Ottawa area for amateurs equipped with a computer and a modem - it's Al Barnes, VE2TYJ, "Hobby Wall". Al maintains it is very user friendly and easy to use. It runs at 14,400 bps and handles file transfers quickly. The system has over 600 megs of files on a full cross-section of subjects including amateur radio, cooking, window games and much more. Al explains that when you initially log in, you'll be asked for your name, call sign and other necessary information, and will be followed by a main menu. He warns, "don't

be overwhelmed by the main menu, study it and let your curiosity wander". If you have a problem all you need do is press the (?) key and online help is available.

Use of the BBS is FREE! Through networking, Al hopes to be soon able to offer communications with Kingston, Ontario and other regions. The BBS phone number is 246-7389 in the Ottawa area.

Santa's Helpers Required

It's that time of year again when children are anxious to communicate with the jolly old gent and make him aware of all the toys and good things they want to find under the tree Christmas morning. Santa is going to be at the Museum of Science and Technology on Sunday, December 11 and 18 so that children can talk to him via 2 metre radio. However, Santa requires helpers who have HTs who can walk around the museum and let children know they can talk to Santa. Bilingual helpers would be helpful. Each child who talks to Santa will receive a beautiful certificate validating their conversation. Volunteers please cont Jerry Wells, VE3CDS.

HT Power Supply Building Party

A reminder that the power supply workshop to build a CSA approved 2 amp 13 VDC HT power supply is scheduled for mid-January. Cost per participant will be \$25 which includes a complete kit of all parts and all the necessary equipment to build the unit. The workshop will take place in the Engineering Building at Carleton University. While you will build your own power supply, there will be qualified leadership showing you how to assemble the units. Space is limited so reserve a spot early by contact either Wil Warren, VE3XMT or Jacques Choquette, VE3TSC at 748-6597 (after 6:00pm)

Potpouri

*A sampling of news and comments
from newsletters and newspapers
from across the country - written
by Jacques Choquette, VE3TSC*



Monitoring Times Sept/94 - Mention was made that sophisticated medical equipment is vulnerable to EMI from cellular phones, radios and even TV's. Examples given were - a ventilator malfunction was caused by a cellular phone, a pacemaker affected by TV signals, a 2 way radio interfering with a defibrillator and radio waves bothering motorized wheelchairs. Experts say the problem lies with the microprocessor that controls these devices. EMI applies a random pulse which scrambles the digital circuits.

Saskatoon - Instead of using a hammer when installing ground rods which can deform their tops, one can use a heavy duty 1/2" electric hammer drill which puts them into the ground with great ease.

Pioneer (Ottawa) - As early as next year, marine communications will be changed by the introduction of satellites that could make present modes (VHF, SSB, ERIRB, ham) items of the past.

Mariners will be using pocket size message transceivers that can send/receive data and telephones good for connections up to 200 miles from the coast.

Sudbury - More proof that CW is not dead! During the recent North Pole trip (Aug 22/94) by 2 Coast Guard icebreakers, Louis St. Laurent (Canada) and Polar Sea (USA), EMI was so bad voice either by radio or satellite telephone was impossible. The only method of communicating was by Morse Code! (Ask Ken VA3KA - he was there)

Metroplex (New York) - A special event station to honour Marconi's memorable transmission on Dec 15/02 between England

and Nova Scotia will operate from Dec 11-31/94 on all HF bands, CW/SSB. A certificate can be had for \$4 (US). QSO details are required with the request. Contact Alan Leith VE1AL, 846 St. George St., Sydney, Nova Scotia, Canada, B1P 1L9.

Border City (Windsor) - The Administrative Council of Amateur Region 3 met in Singapore Sept 10/94 and passed a resolution mentioning that a Morse Code ability be a requirement for frequencies below 30 Mhz. Seems CW is here to stay!

A list from Grove giving the top 100 SW frequencies listened to had the Canadian Air Force at 6753, 9006 and 11233. These can be best heard during early evening hours.

Scarborough - An article by Tony Fegan VE3QF gives a history on the G5RV multiband dipole. To lower its SWR on some bands the dimensions of 31.1 M with 10.4 M of ladder line could be changed to 27.51 M with 12.2 M of 450 ohm ladder line.

Monitoring Times (Oct/94) - Pressure against sale of cellular capable scanners in the US is now more intense. Radio Shack issued an "urgent" message to its managers to "cease selling/displaying" the PRO-23/46/51/2026 scanners due to an "engineering defect". (Listening to cellular is a defect ??!!! - VE3TSC)

Ottawa - Is the proverbial about to hit the fan at Industry Canada ? Recent media stories report an imminent downsizing of some 1,400 jobs at Industry Canada ! If the amateur community feels it is now getting short shrift from the federal government - we wonder what will occur if these media reports materialize.