Rambler

Newsletter of the
Ottawa Valley Mobile
Radio Club Inc. (**OVMRC**)
Volume 47, Issue No 9
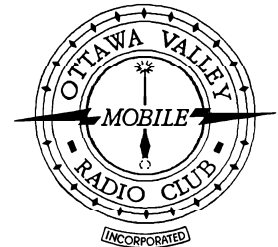
Inside…

Reminders…

Club Meeting · · · · · · Apr 17

Club Exec. Meeting · Apr 24

Rambler Deadline · · May 2

Next Club Meeting · May 15

Winners of the "Spring Bunny Hunt" From left to right, winner Al VE3ZTU, Bunny Hunt host, Jake VA3TQX, and winner Mike VE3ZY.

Homebrew Night 2003

I think that Homebrew is one of the best and most awaited for events! Homebrew night seems to bring out the interest in the members, after all we are Amateurs!

This year was no different; the turnout was good both on stage and in the audience with 7 brave souls showing their efforts, from 'Dead Bug' to 'Dead Ugly' the crew entertained and educated.

First up was Jake Guertin, VA3TQX. Jake showed the work that he had done on the Willenweb that had originally been created by VE3XMT back in 1994. Jake explained the changes and improvements that he had done as well

as doing a demonstration of how the Willenweb worked.

Jake also show 3 GE MastrII radios that he is converting to a 220MHz radio, repeater and a backup 2 meter repeater. Jake did his usual masterful job of explaining the finer points of the conversion

Rambler

OVMRC Executive (2002-2003)

President   Mike Kennedy, VA3TEC
                    godtec@bigfoot.com

Vice-President

Treasurer   Ken Gill, VA3KJG
                    748-0218,

Secretary   Ken McKenzie, VA3NEK
                    829-4884, va3nek@rac

Standing Committee Chairpersons

Amateur Radio Exhibit   Maurice-André Vigneault, VE3VIG
                             749-9010, ve3vig@rac.ca
Amateur Radio Training   Bob Shaw, VE3SUY
                             737-9443, lycott@istop.com
                             Ernie Jury, VE3EJJ
                             728-3666
Accredited Examiner   Bob Kavanagh, VE3OSZ
                             225-6785, ve3osz@rac.ca
Field Day   Adam King, VA3PIP
                             831-9970, va3pip@rac.ca
Historical   Larry Wilcox, VE3WEH
                             747-5565, ve3weh@rac.ca
Flea Market   Vacant

Membership   Adam King, VA3PIP
                             831-9970, va3pip@rac.ca
Newsletter   Bill Hall, VA3WMH
                             830-5580, va3wmh@rac.ca
Publicity & Programs

Radio Operations   Vacant

Technical   Jake Guertin, VA3TQX
                             253-3732, va3tqx@sprint.ca
Emergency Preparedness   Ken Halcrow, VE3SRS
                             837-3261, ve3srs@rac.ca

OVMRC Life Members

Ralph Cameron	VE3BBM
Doug Carswell	VE3ATY
Gerry King	VE3GK
Doreen Morgan	VE3CGO
Ed Morgan	VE3GX
Bill Wilson	VE3NR

Club Website

The OVMRC *Rambler* is available on-line at the club website:

`http://www.ovmrc.on.ca/rambler.htm`

Sponsors

The **OVMRC** acknowledges the following organizations for their support of our activities by providing them with courtesy copies of the *Rambler*:

Bytown Marine, Ottawa, ON
Elkel Ltee, Trois-Riviéres, QC
Kenwood Electronics Canada Inc., Mississauga, ON

The *Rambler* is produced using Corel's Ventura™ 8 software.

The OVMRC website is hosted by Magma Communications Ltd.

OVMRC Repeater

147.300 MHz(+)
444.200 MHz(+)
53.030/52.030 MHz

OVMRC web page
http://www.ovmrc.on.ca
Webmaster: John Rodger,
VE3JR jcr@magma.ca

Next Meeting
Apr 17
Rambler Deadline
May 2

Ramblings

Mike Kennedy
VA3TEC

Lately in the last few weeks, I have noticed a lot of changes in the way communications is happing in the world. Especially the United States because of the September 11th tragedy. Security has been a very big issue to the leaders in congress and the White House. Since Bush has been in power, a number of bills have been passed. The Patriot law, the DMCA or Digital Millennium Copyright Act and now there are new changes to the Super DMCA. (See www.freedom-to-tinker.com for more information on these topics.)

I can't help but wonder… Are these laws in place to stop us from creating new and different communications technology? Since I have heard of Software Defined Radios (SDR) I have always wondered how this technology would fair out? I have been hearing a lot of different views on this topic. Some say that it will be a security risk, because people can change certain parameters of radios to do harmful interference. Others say that SDR will actually help the spectrum problem in the world as stated in the article below . http://www.e-insite.net/index.asp?layout=article&articleid=CA243797

I am beginning to question how these bills in the us will effect Canada? Will Canada be issuing these laws under pressure from the U.S.? Will Canada have to change their laws to keep up? What will Canada do? For an article on these questions please read: http://www.sans.org/rr/country/canada_crime.php. .

Above all, will these laws affect the life of amateur radio operator? Or will just the opposite will happen! I the last few months, there have been a lot of discussions about emergency communications and so the amateur radio has been getting a lot of exposure in the news lately. But will we lose our freedom to tinker?! What do you think on these issues? Security is a big issue that will only get more and more attention. I would like to hear more from the amateur radio community on this issue. What do you think? ❖

Repeater Update

The repeater has been upgraded and some of the problems that were affecting its' usage were fixed. The fixes are as follows:

1 – on the autopatch – you are able to dial a external extension now. After your 7 digits, for a example 729-0101 extension 123 you can dial 729 0101 123 this lets you access an extension. All other functions are same. ** To reset the autopatch timer ext 3 min's * 111-1234 to dial and # only to hang up.

2 – courtesy tones on the VHF, 2 meter repeater have changed. You will now hear a two tone hi/low tone this is the 2 meter repeater.

3 – the UHF, 444.200, repeater tone is one single tone.

4 – the UHF, 444.200, repeater receiver has been realigned so the repeater will receive any UHF radio old or new. The frequency set-up is 444.200 rx and 449.200 tx not 449.195.

5 – the voice id'r now will stop if the repeater detect any one using the repeater and will revert to a cw id at 35 wpm .

I will be on the nets to inform all as the new upgrades

Jake, VA3TQX

SEALED BID AUCTION OVMRC MEMBERS ONLY

COMPLETE HF STATION BELONGING TO FORMER LIFE MEMBER — FRED NOBLE VE3BAJ (SK)
Fred Noble VE3BAJ (S—K) had a very nice, mint condition Yaesu FT-101ZD High Frequency radio station, complete with accessories as shown in the photo.

Meeting Minutes

Ken McKenzie
VA3NEK

March 20, 2003

President Mike opened the meeting, welcoming the group to Homebrew Night. Visitors and Guests were welcomed and due to the large group of presenters, Mike suggested that we launch right into the Homebrew presentations.

Presenters were;

VA3TQX Jake Guertin presenting the Willenweb which he has repaired and updated. In addition he showed three GE MastrII radios that are being converted to a 220 MHz repeater, 220 radio and a 2 meter repeater backup.

VE3MVK Steve McIvor presenting a 2 meter receiver and 4 element Yagi.

VA3IMP Libor Kotacka presented 2 antennas, an 80 meter loop and a 20 meter loop.

VE3OSZ Bob Kavanagh presented a PLL Audio System.

VA3YH Ying Hum presented a paddle, QRP rig, antenna tuner and amp.

VA3STL Alan Steele presented a solar powered battery pack.

VE3CLW Andre Pilon presented a two radio LDF, lightening direction finder.

The winners were;

Tied for first place, Bob Kavanagh and Ying Hum
Second place was awarded to Libor Kotacka.
A special award was given to Steve McIvor for his effort.
Andre Pilon was given an award as he is a special case.

Special thanks to VE3GX Ed Morgan and his staff of judges; Bill Wilson VE3NR and Rene Beaudry VE3JKR..

President Mike then called for reports from the executive and any business items.

Treasurer, Ken Gill VA3KJG, announced that donations had been sent to DARF on behave of silent keys Ted Turner, VE3LV VE3JGQ and Fred Noble, VA3BAJ.

Adam King, VA3PIP, has assumed the Field Day Chairperson's responsibilities.

Larry Wilcox, VE3WEH, moved that the OVMRC donate $100 to VE3KX, Chandrakumar Piprani, better known as BaBa, to help him recover from the fire that destroyed his home.

Motion was seconded by VA3TQX, Jake Guertin and the motion was carried.

Larry announced that Fred Noble's wife had asked that his HF rig be sold and the proceeds be donated to the club. The rig is a Yaesu FT1001 and it will be sold by silent auction. Bids are to be mailed to the Club's PO Box and should be marked BID. The rig will be sold at the next meeting to the highest bid above $425.

It was announced that Diane Stuemer had passed away. Diane had been a graduate of the OVMRC radio course.

There were 42 members attending the meeting.

The 50/50 was won by Jake Guertin, VA3TQX, $27.50. Laser Pointer was won by VA3TEC, Mike Kennedy and Graham VE3GBD won and 80 meter antenna.

The meeting was adjourned.

Error corrections.

Minutes for January 16, 2003
Fredrick (Ted) Turner's call sign VE3JGQ was in-correctly listed as VE3JGK.

Minutes for February 20, 2003
Patricia Rowan's, VA3PUR, name was in-correctly spelt as Rowen.

I apologize for both errors. ❖

Editor's Note:

This edition of the Rambler is the result of the contributions of those who wrote articles and took pictures. I very much appreciate the continued support of those whose effort make the Rambler possible. I hope the readers enjoy the articles and let the authors know. It is only through their efforts that we're able to produce a meaningful and interesting newsletter.

Once again, to all those who have contributed over the years to the many Ramblers of the past, my sincere thanks. Please keep up the good work.

Cheers;

Bill, VA3WMH

P.S. The Rambler is available in colour at the club website.
http://www.ovmrc.on.ca/rambler.htm

Next up was a new member of the Club, VE3MVK, Steve McIvor. Steve had an interesting story as well as his project. Seems that Steve has been an Amateur for something like 22 years but has only spoken on air for about 22 minutes. You see Steve is a very nervous and shy person, so his standing up and doing an excellent job of presenting his project was a great feat for him.

Steve presented a 2 meter receiver and a 4 element Yagi. Steve used a construction method that he called 'Dead Bug' construction. You kind of wire everything together upside down and then glue it all together.

Look for Steve to be a regular presenter now that his first one is under his belt without passing out.
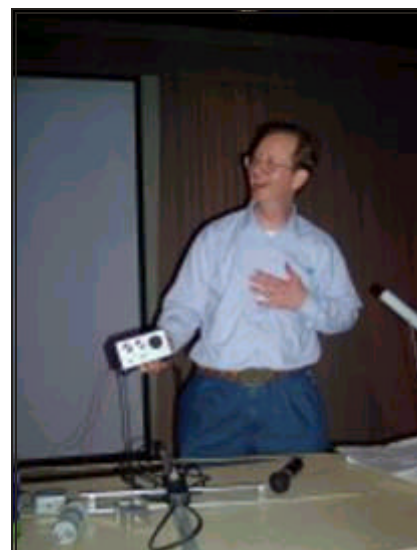
Followed by Libor Kotacka, VA3IMP, seems that Libor has a common problem. His problem is living in what some people call a modern high-rise apartment building. As we all know this makes running antennas a challenge.

Needless to say, Libor has risen to that challenge and showed to of his antennas, an 80 meter Loop and a 40 meter loop. Both his antennas were what could be termed a plumbers or electricians dream. Libor did most of his shopping for materials at Home Hardware and used electrical conduit and copper tubing in creative ways. Libor did a great job complete with a slide presentation of his balcony 'tower' site.

VE3OSZ, Bob Kavanagh brought his latest professionally done technical project and I will let Bob explain it in his own words;

PLL AUDIO SYSTEM

Bob Kavanagh, VE3OSZ

This device is an active audio filter for use at the audio output of a transceiver in order to provide increased selectivity and reduce noise.

The system consists of a phase locked loop, the output of which is filtered by a second order filter. The filter output is amplified and drives either a loudspeaker or headphones.

The phase locked loop (PLL) will lock on to a tone coming from the receiver audio output. The output of the PLL is a constant amplitude square-wave at the frequency of the input tone. The square wave is filtered by the second order filter such that its output is essentially a sinusoidal signal at the frequency of the input tone.

The PLL is able to lock on to a tone in the presence of noise. Thus, if the receiver output is a tone which is almost masked by noise, the PLL can pick out the tone and provide an almost pure tone at the audio amplifier output.

When receiving a CW signal, there are gaps between the tones. During these gaps the PLL is unable to lock on to a signal. At such times, the PLL output is either a randomly varying tone or is the PLL free-running frequency. The purpose of the second order filter is to attenuate these extraneous outputs during the gaps and to emphasize the desired tone. The filter has independent control over its centre frequency and selectivity. In use, the filter is tuned to the desired tone frequency.

The overall result of using the PLL system is to achieve very selective, but adjustable, filtering of the desired signal and to attenuate background noise. Its performance is comparable with that of an audio DSP filter.

Look for much more technical articles to appear in QST and or TCA in the future.

Homebrew Night 2003! *(Continued)*

Ying Hum, VA3YH, explained that back in June of 1998 he had seem this article about a paddle kit. He sent his money off and was just a little surprised that the project required quite a bit of sanding and construction. Well almost five years later he completed the paddle and brought it as well as his QRP rig to Homebrew night.

Ying described his adventures in construction and how he built radio equipment to fit a set of tiny boxes he had built. Rather that finding an enclosure for his projects, he constructed the projects to fit into the enclosures. To use his own words, "This wasn't Dead Bug construction, it was Dead Ugly construction!"

Here you can see his five year old 'new' paddle, transmitter, tuner and amplifier.

VA3STL, Alan Steele, showed off his solar powered battery pack. Alan had built the pack to compliment his Elecraft K2. It consists of a solar panel, two batteries a couple of meters to monitor and should produce enough power on a sunny day to operate his Elecraft all day long. The batteries allow for him to operate on cloudy days as well when the sun doesn't shine! Look for Alan around picnic tables and up in the Gatineaus as well as on Field Day soaking up the rays!

Of course we could not have a Homebrew night without a contribution from Andre Pilon, VE3CLW. Andre didn't bring and sanitary products this year but instead presented a LDF. LDF would stand for Lightning Direction Finder, kind of a RDF but for lightning strikes. Andre's LDF consisted of to radios mount at 90 degrees and two earphones. He says that it is also good for mind expanding white noise experiments.

The Judges headed by Ed Morgan VE3GX and assisted by VE3NR Bill Wilson and Rene Beaudry, VE3JKR, deliberated for quite some time due to the caliber of the entries this year. In true judicial fashion they decided that there was a tie for first place with Bob Kavanagh and Ying Hum having projects of equal merit.

Many Thanks to the Judges for their efforts.

Second place was awarded to Libor Kotacka.

In addition to the two 'normal' prizes, the judges also awarded Steve McIvor a special prize for his oratorical efforts and not passing out.

And of course, one can not forget Andre Pilon, the judges awarded Andre a prize because he is a 'Special Case'.

Homebrew night seems to come and go all too quickly but look for articles or small pieces about each project. The participants were all asked to submit a short explanation of their projects by President Mike, which is why Bob didn't have to suffer my trying to explain, his very professionally done work.

Congratulations to all for their efforts and hard work!

Ken McKenzie, VA3NEK

Pictures by Larry Wilcox, VE3WEH

If you missed my column last month, it is the fault of my newly installed Norton 2003 Anti-Virus system and the fickle finger of fate. I had set Norton to scan my outgoing mail sent from Eudora Light. As a result, Norton takes a long time in scanning any attachment for viruses and although the Eudora Light mail system showed the email was sent, it was NOT sent, so our editor did not receive my column in time for publication. The solution is simple, turn off the outgoing email scan within Norton before sending any attachments to ensure the message gets sent. I wonder how many other people have had this annoying result from turning on the "scan outgoing mail" as a preference under Norton?

As I sit here writing this column, the weather has turned cold again and we are expecting more snow and possibly some freezing rain! What a cold start for April. Fortunately, we don't have the conditions being experienced by Nova Scotia. They received 60cm of rain in Truro and many were flooded out. We know that spring is just around the corner but which corner? Unfortunately, I missed our February 20th General meeting and the opportunity to see the Elecraft HF K2 radio kits presented by Adam King VA3PIP and his friend, Alan Steele VA3STL. I have heard their presentation was impressive. Speaking of impressive, our Home Brew night last meeting provided some excellent technical projects and home-brewed antennas, not to mention the humourous home brew radio DF system presented and described by Andre Pilon VE3CLW.

RAMBLER APRIL 1993

Our cover story this month featured, "Helpless hams harried by receding hare lines!" by Wil (Rabbit) Warren, VE3XMT. On March 13, 1993, Wil VE3XMT, Mike VE3FFK and Peter VE3EPB organized a bunny hunt with a twist. They simulated a midair crash of two aircraft. The day was cold, a low temperature of -11C with a wind chill of -28C. A simplex net was held on 146.490MHz and the bunny was on transmitting 147.1215MHz using a tape sending out a distress signal - but not a real ELT signal. Hunters checked in with Al VE3TYJ between 9-10am on a mobile net and Dave VE3YNC was the base net controller. The bunny transmitted a spiel of dialog "In the Air" and another spiel "On the Ground" and then an "endless loop" message played continuously at low power. Among the eighteen participants, Dan VE3DCL was the first to arrive at the simulated crash site. He did his best to tell the other hunters where he was located. He soon discovered there was more than one transmitter. The exercise simulated a midair crash so there were two transmitters to find. The rest of the hunters converged on the bunny location and had to find cardboard pieces of airplane parts that Mike and Peter had scattered around. There were 32 items that the hunters had to retrieve. This tactic encouraged everyone to get involved. The hunters used tactical call signs and grid-square coordinates during the search. The tactical communications were quite fascinating and the interchanges were educational. Twenty-four hamburgers and 24 hotdogs were served after the hunt and a nifty dessert topped off the hunt.

The Minutes from the OVMRC General Meeting of March 18, 1993 by Larry Woram VE3WLN, contained several interesting notes. One of the guests attending the meeting was Danny SP7ROF, from Poland.

Minute Item 4) Museum: Cy Webster announced the receipt of a donation of an MFJ 1278 data controller and software from MFJ for VE3JW. Cy and Jerry Welles met with Mr. Morin from Health and Welfare concerning the Senior Operators grant and Mr. Morin was very pleased with the project. He indicated that more funds would be made available to the Senior Operators.

Minute Item 6) Training: Doug VE3ATY advised this year's classes were over, five students already passed with Ernie achieving 99% on the written plus his 12wpm, with 20 amateurs from the class to graduate.

Minute Item 7) Membership: Mike VE3BGP informed the meeting we had about 286 members.

Larry Woram's column "From the mailbox" covered an interesting note about a flyer received from Themes at Sea Inc., Coral Gables, Florida. They were offering the YAESU DX-Caribe Cruise with two amateur radio stations operating aboard the S.S. Ocean Breeze while at sea. Guests included astronaut Ron Parise WA4SIR, Martti Laine OH2BH, Ellen White W1YL and YAESU staff. The cruise visited the Islands of Aruba, Bonaire, Grenada, Barbados, Martinique and Curacao, and prices started at $1395US for the eight-night adventure. I wonder if any of our members went on this cruise or if in fact, it occurred?

For those that still enjoy and use Heathkit equipment, there was an article in the Ground Waves newsletter of the Windsor Amateur Radio Club, "Part 2 of The History of Heathkit" It detailed how the company evolved from building home built aircraft to entering the field of electronics and their first kit, an oscilloscope. The company grew in so much by the 1970s their catalogue included 400 kits and accessories and sales had topped $60 million!

Ian Kennedy, VE3SNX continued his article on "The other modes - Make mine Morse - is CW Completely Worthless?" Some more of the Editor's handiwork? Ian described in detail the "perfect" Morse signal with spacing as follows: dot = 1 dot, dash = 3 dots, character space = 3 dots, word space = 7 dots, bauds per cycle = 50 dots. In Morse code measurement, the standard "word" is PARIS, which consists of 50 dots. There is a mathematical formula to go with this: WPM = dots per second x 60 / 50. Ian also covered various forms of Morse Code including Manual Morse using a hand key, Automatic Morse, produced by a machine using a pre-punched tape with characters and spaces of uniform length, Semi-automatic Morse, using a bug key with characters formed by the combination of automatically formed dots and manually formed dashes and spaces and using an electronic key where characters are formed by the combination of automatically formed dots and dashes while the spaces are manually formed and finally, using a keyboard.

President Jerry Wells VE3CDS wrote an article entitled "Large leaks leave seniors soaking!" The RAMBLER Editor, Neil Herber, VE3PUE, certainly took advantage of his "Editorial Licence" to come up with such a title for Jerry's article! Jerry wrote about another delay in getting VE3JW back on the air due to a leaky roof at the Museum. The antennas would have to be removed from the roof while it was repaired or replaced and this was scheduled for April 3, 1993. The new vertical antenna purchased with a grant

from the New Horizons Program Grant from the Department of Health and Welfare would be installed in the meantime. A new tower and beam, also purchased with funds from the New Horizons Program, would be installed in the spring, close to the new location of the communications display which would incorporate the new amateur display VE3JW. Jerry was hopeful the new display would be on schedule.

I will end my column this month with a note about the last two Capital Area Region Bunny Hunters Association (CARBHA) Hunts held on February 26, 2003 and the "Spring Bunny Hunt." Jake VA3TQX, our Technical Chairperson, has been working very hard building a new antenna platform, complete with new wiring, BNC mounts and antennas for the "old" Willenweb which was donated to our club by Wil Warren, VE3XMT. Jake won first place in the CARBHA "Frosty February Hunt" using the reconditioned Willenweb! The elusive "Bunnies," Bill Jensen VE3NOD and Kris VA3URL are newly licenced amateurs and were hiding way out in the west end of Ottawa, a few K's south of Bells Corners! Jake showed off the Willenweb during Home Brew Night last month. The "Spring Bunny Hunt" was hosted by Jake on Sunday, March 30, 2003. He held a-level five hunt, gave lots of clues to the hunters and was found hiding way out near March Road at Beaver Pond Park. Four vehicles took part in tracking him down and as a result, the next hunt will be held on April 13, 2003, sponsored by winners Mike VE3ZY and Al VE3ZTU. Check-in to the local FM nets for more information if you would like to participate. ❖

News from VE3JW

The "Connexions" Exhibit at the Museum of Sci and Tech, where the VE3JW exhibit station is situated, is undergoing major renovations and rebuilding of its displays.

A new display showing fiber optics is being built in conjunction with the Nortel entreprise. It will cover a hugh area of the South-West corner of the Museum and will be using a newly built second level in that area.

Work is being carried out mostly at night so as not to inconvenience the visitors during the daytime opening hours. Nevertheless, Museum crews have been at work during daytime as well, and the noise level increases at times whenever lumber or steel are being shifted or power tools are being used.

At JW, we have been trying to accommodate the public, which is at a very low density at this time, since exhibits in this area have been removed and barricades been installed. All our regular operators have been advised to protect themselves and the equipment, and to close the station and vacate the area when the situation warrants.

So, our activities at JW have been somewhat slowed down since the beginning of the construction, but, before this happened, we were able to conduct our regular events such as White Cane Week and Guides on the Air.

Here are a couple of pics of our activities before the construction phase. In the first picture we have our regulars, Larry VE3WEH and Graham VE3GBD, controling the Trans Provincial Net on 40 metres during White Cane Week. In the second pic we have Mike VE3LTN, on the right, and Duncan VE3GXU, WCW guest, having a European contact on 20 metres. Mike is one of our new regulars at the VE3JW station. In the third pic we have Barry VE3KJB, enjoying the facilities as he is working CW on HF.

Although our activities are somewhat curtailed due to the works going on in our area, it is still possible for any licenced Radio Amateurs to come in and enjoy the station. Until the end of June, your visit will require a little more coordination as crews may or may not be at the station depending on the construction activities. So, consult the OVMRC website at VE3JW Operations, phone the station at 991-6949, or contact the scheduled operator. I'm always available, try 749-9010.

Cheers! and have a fantastic Spring!
Maurice-André, VE3VIG ❖

From The Shack
Of A New Amateur

Tom Zinck
VA3NFA

I really enjoyed the recent Rambler articles on ARPS and UIView by Ken, VA3NEK, so I sent him an email telling him how much I liked the articles. BIG MISTAKE! The results of my email exchanges with Ken were him asking me if I would write an article for this column. Not knowing what I was getting myself into, I agreed. Ken may have persuaded me to do this by offering to buy me a coffee, or another type of beverage, who says bribes don't work! Seriously, I am pleased to be able to help out and contribute to this great newsletter.

Like Ken, I am a newly licensed amateur. I was previously licensed as KC2JMH (long story), and then became VA3NFA in July 2002. As I do not yet have my HF ticket (I know, I know I am working on it), I spend all of my ham radio time on 50Mhz and up. I live in Kanata, and can often be found chasing the elusive DX on 6 meters, rag chewing on 432.200 USB, or lurking on the local 2 meter repeaters.

Soon after getting my license, and then joining RAC and the OVMRC, I discovered that amateur radio is a HUGH hobby, with enough different bands, modes, contests, grid-chasing, etc, to keep one busy for a lifetime or two. With my background in computer science, I soon became very interested in the digital modes, and went from having one computer at home I sometimes used for work, to having 4 PC's networked together, each with a specific amateur-radio related purpose. I was very pleased that I could merge my passion for computing with my new found interest in RF.

I am active on APRS with a dedicated base station setup and a Tiny Tracker III beacon for the car (VA3NFA-9), and I have worked many new 6 meter grids using the WSJT digital modes. One of the newest digital mode "discoveries" I have made is Slow Scan Television (SSTV), and that is the focus of this column.

SSTV is basically a way to send images, one frame at a time, over RF. It is mostly used on HF for "postcard" QSO's to other hams all over the world. When I first learned about SSTV, I downloaded the MMSSTV software, hooked up a PC to my FT847 with a RASCAL soundcard interface and tuned into 14.230 Mhz, the freq that seems to have the most SSTV activity. I was amazed at the quality of the images I was receiving. I was hooked!

The only problem was that I could not Tx on HF, as I do not have HF privileges. I then found out that there is some local SSTV activity on VHF. Working with some very patient guys in the West Carleton Amateur Radio Club I soon had my SSTV VHF station up and running. In fact, I found out that there is even a 2m FM SSTV repeater located just west of me in Almonte. It's call sign is VE3OSQ and is maintained by VA3KS. It simply takes an incoming SSTV image and retransmits it on the same freq, which is 144.525. This SSTV repeater sends out a beacon every 20 minutes, one of which looks like this:

I was pleasantly surprised at the amount of SSTV traffic on this repeater, and I often leave my station on to receive all the images. As a proud father of two young kids, I also could not resist sending out their photos to the repeater.. pretty cool. SSTV has several modes, including modes for high quality color images (640x480) that can take minutes to transmit, and modes that send the images in black and white at 320x240 (QVGA) resolution in a few seconds.

Now that I had my base station SSTV setup complete and working,

I then discovered that there is gear available to allow Mobile SSTV! Yippee! More toys to buy! Specifically, I am talking about the Kenwood line of products, including the TH-D7 HT radio and the now discontinued VC-H1 SSTV encoder/decoder that mates with the TH-D7 and other Kenwood radios such as the D700 mobile rig. Being addicted to Ebay, I was able to find a used VC-H1 and I snatched it up. Now, I can take pictures while I am away from my shack, and immediately transmit them to the SSTV repeater, or to another ham with a mobile SSTV setup.

For those not familiar with the VC-H1, it is a cell-phone sized, battery powered device introduced by Kenwood around 1998. It contains a camera module, a LCD screen, and cable to attach to a radio. With the press of one button, the VC-H1 capture the image via the camera,

superimposes your call sign, encodes to SSTV format, and sends the image to the attached radio for transmission. For lack of a better way to describe this: very cool !

So, immediately after I purchased the VC-H1, I jumped in the van, and drove around the western part of the city taking SSTV pictures and sending them to the SSTV repeater. Once again the quality of the pictures amazed me.

SSTV is certainly a fun mode for sending and receiving snapshots over RF, but it also has serious potential for emergency communications. As they say, a picture is worth a thousands words! Imagine being able to send a high-quality picture of a flooding river back to the command center! Or image being able to capture an image of a threatening cloud formation, and send this picture in near real-time to Environment Canada for analysis? The possibilities are enormous!

Well, my fingers are getting tired of typing, and there seems to be some Aurora propagation happening on 6 meters, so I will end this here. Anyone who would like more information on SSTV can check the following internet sites, or email me at va3nfa@rac.ca and I will do what I can to help out. Hope to see you on VHF SSTV soon !

Internet Resources

SSTV FAQ:www.igs.net/~va3ks/SSTV FAQ.htm
RAC Digital Modes (members only):www.rac.ca/infodig.htm

MMSSTV Software: www.qsl.net/mmhamsoft/mmsstv/

Other software:
www.dxzone.com/catalog/Software/SSTV/

VC-H1 information:
www.kenwood.co.jp/i/products/info/amateur/vch1.html

More pictures and links:
members.rogers.com/tomzinck/ham/sstv.htm

Continued from page: 3

It is being offered for sealed bid auction to members of the OVMRC. Included is a matching Hammond speaker Model number 1408J, an MFJ Deluxe VersaTuner II Model MFJ 949E, a Realistic Model 9A8 microphone and straight and semi-auto CW keys in a black carrying case. The FT-101ZD is high performance HF transceiver covering amateur radio bands 160 thru 10 meters, including the WARC Bands, on SSB, CW, and AM. The transceiver has a digital display, VOX, semi-break-in CW with sidetone and a 600 Hz CW filter, a 25 kHz crystal calibrator, selectable AGC, 10 dB/20 db RF attenuator, built in power supply and a cooling fan. The manuals for the radio and tuner are also included and there is a spare set of tubes.

Steve Cochran VE3SBC worked with Fred at the Department of Transport and was a close friend. Fred's widow asked Steve to look after Fred's amateur radio gear and requested that it all be sold with all proceeds donated to the OVMRC. Therefore, Fred's complete HF Station is being offered to members who would like to make sealed bids above the minimum reserve bid of $425.00. Sealed bids from members will be accepted up until our next General Meeting which will be held on Thursday, April 17, 2003. Sealed bids will be accepted during this meeting, up until the time they are opened on stage. The complete HF station as shown in the photo will be sold to the highest bidder offering more than $425.00. To assist you in evaluating the value of the FT-101ZD transceiver, the radio alone was auctioned off in March 2003 for $305.00 US on eBay. You can submit your written, signed and sealed bid by hand to Larry Wilcox VE3WEH or send it by mail to the club's postal address to be received prior to the April 17, 2003 General Meeting.

IMPORTANT: Please write "BID" on the left bottom corner of your envelope to ensure it is not opened until the General Meeting on April 17, 2003.

Ernie Brown VA3OEB, was also a close friend of Fred's has checked out the FT101ZD. transceiver. He assured us it is working well and has received 5/9 reports from the East Coast of Canada. Incidentally, if you were a former member of the Department of Transport, Ernie still conducts the "DOT/DOC Net" at 11am every Tuesday on repeater VE3TEL. Ernie welcomes anyone that may wish to join the net.

Other miscellaneous radio gear will be offered for sale when Steve attends our "Junk in the Trunk" mini-flea market which is being planned during the month of May at the Canada Museum of Science & Technology.

For those of you who don't remember Fred, the May 1989 RAMBLER included "LIFE MEMBERSHIP NOMINATIONS" by President Alan Boyce VE3LNH. A total of eight members signed the nomination for Fred Noble VE3BAJ for his consistent, reliable and long-standing contributions and service to the club, by personally welcoming visitors and newcomers, regularly chairing the Nomination Committee, as one of the most frequent operators of VE3JW, for his special amateur radio demonstrations for visiting groups and media events at the VE3JW station, as a long-standing member of the Emergency Measures Amateur Radio Group, for regularly assisting in community service operations, and for serving as a mentor to students of the club's Amateur radio course.

If you have any questions regarding this sale, please contact Steve Cochran VE3SBC by telephone 248-0323. Interestingly, during the late 1950's, Steve and a few other amateurs, created the RA Radio Club under callsign VE3RAR. This club station was originally located in a house on Lisgar Street, but later the club moved into the Recreation Association Centre (RA Centre). They held amateur radio training classes about 1960 within the RA Centre.

Steve Cochran VE3SBC
248-0323

Larry Wilcox VE3WEH
747-5565