

# Rambler

Newsletter of the  
Ottawa Valley Mobile  
Radio Club  
Incorporated



Feb 2016

Edition 60

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## President's Ramblings

We are getting ready for the February 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. Our main presentation will feature Richard Ferch, VE3KI from Richmond ON who is retired from a career in nuclear safety. Richard is a serious HF CW and RTTY contester with his modest Elecraft K3 station. Richard is also a contributor to the NIMM contest logging program and also current President of QCWA Chapter 70 and now, this year, the Regulatory Affairs Officer for RAC.

Richard's presentation will be on the subject of the DX cluster network, how it developed, how it operates, how it can assist you in DXing and contesting and some of the pit falls. We are also attempting to have Glenn MacDonell, VE3XRA, the new President of Radio Amateurs of Canada address the Club.

The January meeting saw a full house. The thirty-five folks in attendance were captivated to see and hear José Campione, VA3PCJ/VE3DTI give his wonderful story and picture presentation about his ham radio adventures with his KX3 sailing on the Ottawa River to Aylmer Island to both qualify and then activate the island destination as part of the Canadian Islands Awards Program.

Bravo José for a wonderful presentation, everybody loved it.

At the January meeting, Barry Allison, VE3NJK took the final orders for the Club Antenna Project. Barry deserves a lot of credit for doing the bulk purchasing, preparing and packaging the materials and doing some of the machine work. Helping Barry was Peter Carss, VE3XEM using his machinist lathe to cut and thread the aluminium rod. Barry distributed 12 kits at the February 8<sup>th</sup> workshop. The rest should be ready for distribution at the February 17<sup>th</sup> meeting providing we receive in time the back ordered SO 239 coax adapter.

Harold Hamilton, VA3UNK was a visitor at the January meeting and made an announcement seeking volunteers to provide Amateur Radio Communications for the Canadian Ski Marathon February 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. This is an annual event involving the well coordinated resources from many radio clubs to establish communications between venues along the route from Buckingham to Lachute, Quebec. It will be the 43<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of Radio-communications support for this event. It is likely too late to become involved this year, but volunteer support will again be required for next year, so keep the

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## Meeting Dates

### Club Meeting:

**February 17<sup>th</sup>**  
**DX Cluster**

By  
Richard Ferch, VE3KIW

also

Glenn MacDonell, VE3XRA  
President, RAC will be addressing  
the Club

and

### Next Workshop

**Monday, March 7<sup>th</sup>**

Test Session for J Pole antennas  
and FM transceivers.

event in mind. Details are shown  
at: [www.radio-1.ca/tiki-index.php](http://www.radio-1.ca/tiki-index.php).  
I have (Continued on [page 3](#))

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*For information about the duties and responsibilities about all Executive and Chair positions, please visit the OVMRC forums, Member section or contact any member of the Executive.*

**Sponsors**

The OVMRC acknowledges the following organizations for their support of our activities:

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Rockland, ON

Email: [peppersradio@videotron.ca](mailto:peppersradio@videotron.ca)WEB site: [www.peppersradio.net](http://www.peppersradio.net)**RADIOWORLD TORONTO**WEB site: [www.radioworld.ca](http://www.radioworld.ca)**OVMRC Life Members**

Ernie Jury, VE3EJJ

Maurice-André Vigneault, VE3VIG

Ralph Cameron, VE3BBM

Doug Carswell, VE3ATY

Doreen Morgan, VE3CGO

**OVMRC Repeaters**

147.300 Mhz (+) (no tone)

444.200 MHZ (temporarily off-air)

**Amateur Radio Exhibit****VE3JW**

Web site:

[ovmrc.on.ca/ve3jw.htm](http://ovmrc.on.ca/ve3jw.htm)Canada Science & Technology  
Museum

*Is temporarily off the air due to the closure of the Canada Science and Technology Museum*

*The Rambler is the official newsletter of the Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club Incorporated and is published 11 times a year (monthly, except for July). Opinions expressed in the Rambler are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the OVMRC, its officers or its members. Permission is granted to republish the contents in whole or in part, providing the source is acknowledged. Commercial use of the contents is expressly prohibited.*

*Submit articles to the editor or by e-mail to:*

[Robert Cherry, VA3AOD](mailto:Robert.Cherry@VA3AOD)[cw527@ncf.ca](mailto:cw527@ncf.ca)**Visit the OVMRC Store**

at

<http://www.cafepress.ca/ovmrc>**Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club, Incorporated****PO Box 41145****Ottawa, ON K1G 5K9****[www.ovmrc.on.ca](http://www.ovmrc.on.ca)**

(Continued from [page 1](#)) noticed three of our radio course graduates, Jocelyn Tremblay VE3JCT, Tom Mercer VA3LJS and Frank Fullum VE2KOI are signed up and on the Radio Assignments roster for the 2016 CSM. Good for you guys; we will be calling for a report at our March meeting.

On February 8th, we hosted a CW and Morse Code Workshop in response to a request by several new hams from this year's radio course; 23 folks attended including many old time members of the club. The show and tell included keys, bugs and paddles of all sorts, keyers, software for learning, code, code practice oscillator circuits, software to keyboard and decode Morse, small QRP CW rigs, the Morse code prosings and abbreviations, and how you conduct a CW QSO. If anybody wants a copy of my presentation, send me a note to [VE3LC@rac.ca](mailto:VE3LC@rac.ca).

On the same subject of the Workshop session, I have included in this issue of the Rambler a reprinted copy of an article I wrote for TCA magazine in 2010 titled "Operating CW without knowing a Dit".

We are planning further Workshops in addition to our regular monthly meetings. The next one will be Monday, March 7<sup>th</sup>. We will be hosting a Workshop to test your newly constructed "J- Pole" antenna. This will be a session with appropriate equipment to sweep the Return Loss performance of the antenna to insure it resonates properly on the 2 mtr and 70 cm bands. We will also have test equipment available to test your VHF / UHF portable and mobile FM transceivers for proper receiver sensitivity, RF power out, and modulation. The Workshop should be very tutorial.

I can also report that the Club has now purchased a \$200 Gift Certificate from Radioworld to be presented as the winning door prize at the June AGM meeting. Remember, this door prize will be won by an OVMRC member based on a draw of a winning ticket with chances determined by your recorded attendance at each monthly general meeting during the 2015 - 2016 season.

Finally, remember to tune into the OVMRC 2 mtr FM net hosted by Net Controller, Ken, VE3EKN on VE3TWO, 147.300 + Thursday evenings at 8 pm.

So that's about it for February, see you all at the our Wednesday February 17<sup>th</sup> meeting at the Aviation Museum

73 all  
Norm Rashleigh, VE3LC

## Radio Course Report from Norm, VE3LC

Since the last Rambler in January, we have conducted further examination sessions for Radio Course candidates and are pleased to report the OVMRC has another six full members of the Club with their call signs. Out of the 20 newly minted hams in the OVMRC, 3 got their Basic Qualification, 14 got their Basic with Honours Qualification and another 3 got Basic with Honours and Advanced Qualification. Félicitations à tous.

Several more students that have not tried their test; we hope to report next month several more have made the grade.

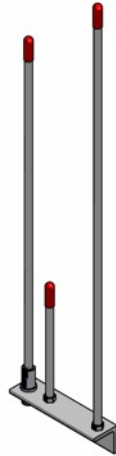


We congratulate and welcome the following now full members of the Club that were the product of our Radio Course this year.

- Gerhard Roth VA3YGR
- Matthew Anderton VE2AAV
- Frank Fullum VE2KOI
- Colin Buda VA3PAJ
- Geoff McGuire VA3DNA
- Yaroslav Doroshenko VA3ZYD
- Jocelyn Tremblay VE3JCT
- Barry Acton VE3XBA
- Ken Lehman VE3IKL
- Derek Aubin VA3UBI
- David Hanson VA3AYE
- Richard Aronoff VA3RLA
- Andrew Lauzon VE3FTI
- Christopher Landry VE3BRJ
- Marc Belanger VE3BOE
- Paul Ramsden VA3PNR
- Gord Mercier VA3IOT
- Tom Mercer VA3LJS
- Ron Smith VE3LBU
- Tim Bailey VE3TXB

## J Pole Antenna Project Update

The antenna project has been popular with OVMRC members; 25 kits were prepared and all have been purchased. We are sorry that no more are available for late comers. Twelve kits have already been distributed to folks attending the February 8th workshop. We are hopeful the rest can be distributed to purchasers at our General Meeting on February 17th however, as of this writing, we are still



awaiting delivery of the remainder of the SO239 adapter components from Radioworld.

We applaud Barry Allison, VE3NJK and Peter Carss, VE3XEM for all their effort bringing this project to fruition.

## Workshop March 7<sup>th</sup>

As part of the Workshop planned for March 7<sup>th</sup> bring your J Pole antenna and we can do a "Return Loss" sweep of the antenna using a spectrum analyser/tracking generator combination instrument along with a directional coupler. Also, at the workshop, we will have instrumentation to test the vital performance parameters of your FM transceivers be it portable or mobile. This will include frequency accuracy, receiver sensitivity, transmitter power and modulation deviation. So bring out your FM rigs as well and we will test them.

Norm, VE3LC

## Gordon (Gord) Grant, VE3DY - Charter Member of the OVMRC

*By Norm Rashleigh, VE3LC*

In the last issue of the Rambler, we re-published two early issues of the OVMRC newsletter from May and September, 1958 when it was first called "The Rambler". In the May 1958 issue, "G. Grant, 3DY" was listed as the Activities Chairman. Gordon along with Ed and Doreen Morgan (VE3GX and VE3CGO) and others were founding members of the Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club back in 1958. Gord was also the early editor of the Rambler and served as OVMRC Secretary-Treasurer 1959-1960.

Out of all those early charter members of the Club, only Doreen Morgan and Gord Grant remain with us today.

Current members of the OVMRC are likely aware of Doreen Morgan VE3CGO as she is a life member of the Club and remains prominent on the Club Roster. Her story was nicely told in an article in Sept-Oct issue of TCA magazine which we were given permission to re-print and appeared in our October, 2015



*Recent photo of Gordon Grant, VE3DY enjoying a cup of coffee at the Summerhays Restaurant*

Rambler. However, current members may not be so aware of Gordon Grant, VE3DY as he did not remain so involved with the club over the years having allegiance as well with other organizations.

Gordon Grant, VE3DY still lives in his own home in Elmvale Acres with his wife and daughter and many HF antennas on the roof. We are not sure Gord's actual age, but he received his first amateur call

sign in 1934 when he was 15 so I guess we can do the math.

Gord studied Electrical Engineering at McGill University and became employed during the war years at the National Research Council working on gun-laying radar and other military projects. Gord continued his career after the war at the NRC in the Radio and Electrical Engineering Design Section and was involved in work establishing the Lake Traverse Radio Observatory in Algonquin Park. Gord retired from the NRC in 1974.

Gordon Grant was first licenced in Ottawa in 1934 with the call sign VE3ABG. In 1947 he became VE2AM while living in Kingsmere, Quebec. In 1950, Gord returned to live in Ottawa and obtained his present call sign, VE3DY. Besides Gord's involvement and membership with the OVMRC, he first became a member of the OARTG in 1934, the forerunner of



the Ottawa Amateur Radio Club and served that club as Groundwave editor 1951 - 1967, Treasurer 1950 -54 & 1968 - 71 and President 1960 - 62.

Gord Grant has been modestly active over the decades on the HF bands on both phone and CW. He was an early promoter of 6 and 2 metre local communications before any commercial equipment was available for those bands. He still carries on with a weekly CW sked with a friend in Florida. Gord also checks into the our weekly Pot Lid CW net on Sunday mornings on 3620 kHz with a good solid fist on the key. You will also hear Gord's cheerful voice checking into the QCWA VHF FM net on VE3MPC Monday evenings. Gord will often

join the QCWA group on Tuesday mornings at the Summerhays Restaurant when he can get a lift from his daughter. With a twinkle in his eye, it seems he is always giving gifts to unsuspecting people from the treasurers that still remain in his basement.

Gordon Grant has been a long time member of the Quarter Century Wireless Association and a member of the local QCWA Chapter 70. He was awarded his QCWA Century Certificate and received his QCWA 80 year Anniversary Award as a radio amateur in May, 2014.

If you hear Gord, VE3DY on the air, don't pass up the opportunity to call him, say hello and wish him well.

At 5:00 P.M. on the second Wednesday of each month at Donna's Express Restaurant at the corner of Churchill and Scott Streets in Ottawa.

We have an online discussion group on Yahoo Groups called ov-qrp.

See:

[groups.yahoo.com/group/ov-qrp/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ov-qrp/) for details or email va3ovq at qsl.net.

**Rideau Lakes Amateur Radio Club (RLARC)**

[ve3rlr.dyndns.org/](http://ve3rlr.dyndns.org/):

**West Carleton Amateur Radio Club**

[www.wcarc.on.ca](http://www.wcarc.on.ca)

**VE3ORF/3730 Group**

[www.ve3orf.com/](http://www.ve3orf.com/)

**CRAO Club Radio Amateur Outaouais (CRAO)**

## What's Happening Elsewhere!

Check it out; let us know what's going on in your club.

**Ottawa Amateur Radio Club (OARC)**

[www.oarc.net/blog/](http://www.oarc.net/blog/):

**Ottawa Valley QRP Society:**

[www.qsl.net/va3ovq/VA3OVQ/Welcome.html](http://www.qsl.net/va3ovq/VA3OVQ/Welcome.html)

The Ottawa Valley QRP Society is a group of Amateur (Ham) Radio operators in the Canadian National Capitol Region with an interest in QRP (low-power) operating, equipment homebrewing and antenna experimentation. The group holds the Amateur Radio call sign VA3OVQ. Membership is free and open to anyone in the National Capitol region with an interest in low power Amateur Radio.

Our monthly dinner meetings are :

## 2016 Dates

### Club Meeting Date:

February 17<sup>th</sup>

March 16<sup>th</sup>

April 20<sup>th</sup>

May 18<sup>th</sup>

June 15<sup>th</sup>

### Rambler deadlines:

March.....2<sup>nd</sup>

April.....6<sup>th</sup>

May.....4<sup>th</sup>

June.....1<sup>st</sup>

Please submit articles for the Rambler to the editor:

[Robert Cherry](mailto:Robert.Cherry@qsl.net)

No later than the deadline for the desired edition.

**March Rambler submission deadline is:**

**Friday, 2<sup>nd</sup> March**

*The article on the next three pages was first published in the September-October 2010 issue of The Canadian Amateur magazine and is being reprinted with the permission of its publisher Radio Amateurs of Canada.*

# OPERATING CW WITHOUT KNOWING A DIT

Norm Rashleigh, VE3LC

I became a licensed Amateur Radio operator in 1963. In those days, the Amateur Service, as did all radio services, came under the Ministry of Transport. At the time, there were two Certificates for Amateur Radio Proficiency: "Amateur" and "Advanced Amateur". For the basic "Amateur" certificate, there was a code proficiency requirement of 10 WPM. The "Advanced Amateur" certificate examination could only be taken after demonstrating at least one year of operating activity on CW as proven by your logbook. The "Advanced Amateur" examination then demanded a code proficiency test of 15 WPM. Holders of the Advanced certificate were then allowed to operate phone on the HF bands that were otherwise restricted to CW only with the first "Amateur" ticket.

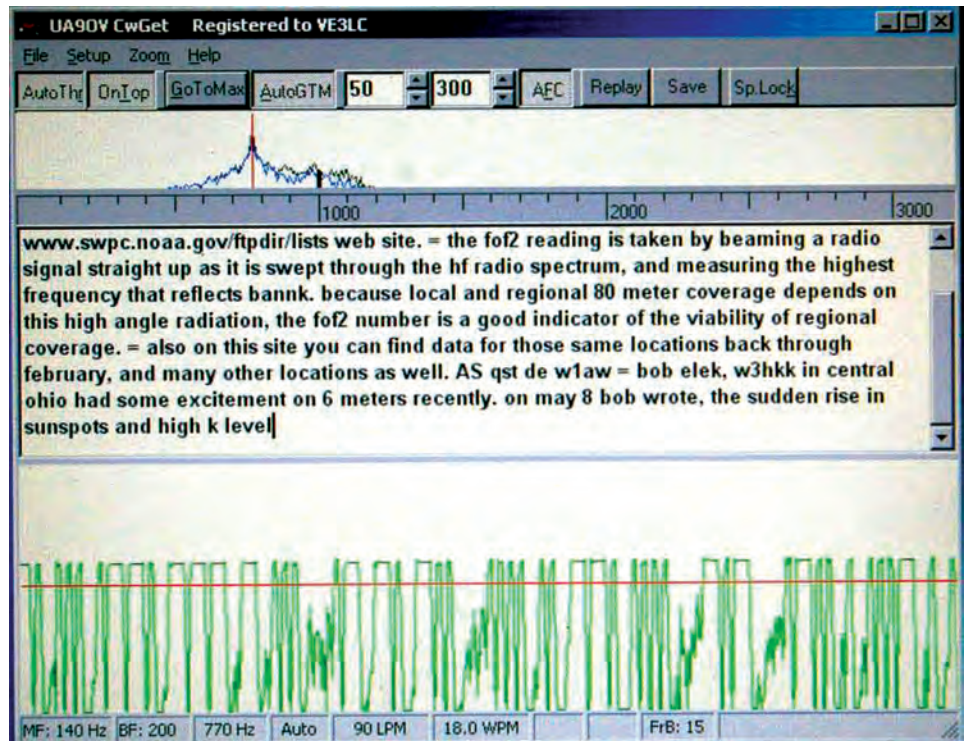
I must confess, I always struggled with CW; although, by operating regularly in the early 60s in lieu of doing my homework, I mastered the 15 WPM requirement for the Advanced certificate within a year. With my newly minted "Advanced", I then got on phone and let my not-so-good proficiency in Morse lapse almost completely.

With retirement and a bit of spare time, I again wanted to pursue operating CW, which remains still one of the best modes for QRP contesting. I joined the old and venerable "Pot Lid Slow Speed CW Net", still going strong on 3620 kHz Sunday mornings at 11 am local Ottawa time. The Pot Lid Net was founded and is still hosted by Ed Morgan, VE3GX, and boasts 37 years of continuous operation. Well I soon restored my CW proficiency enough so as not to make a fool of myself on Ed's net. However, my slow speed CW proficiency was still no match for contest work. The buzz of 30 WPM plus CW seemed daunting. That's when I started looking at a little computer assistance to help me get into the big leagues of CW operation. A good CW copying program was needed.

## CW COPYING SOFTWARE

### CwGet

CwGet is Windows-based software that is freely downloadable from the Internet. Although it can be used successfully unregistered, I recommend paying the modest price for the full registered version that adds features like saving your settings for the next launch of the program. The program uses receiver audio that is connected to the line-input of the computer sound card. The application shows a spectral display of your receiver bandpass and provides an adjustable audio bandpass filters for selection of the particular signal(s). In fact, this Digital

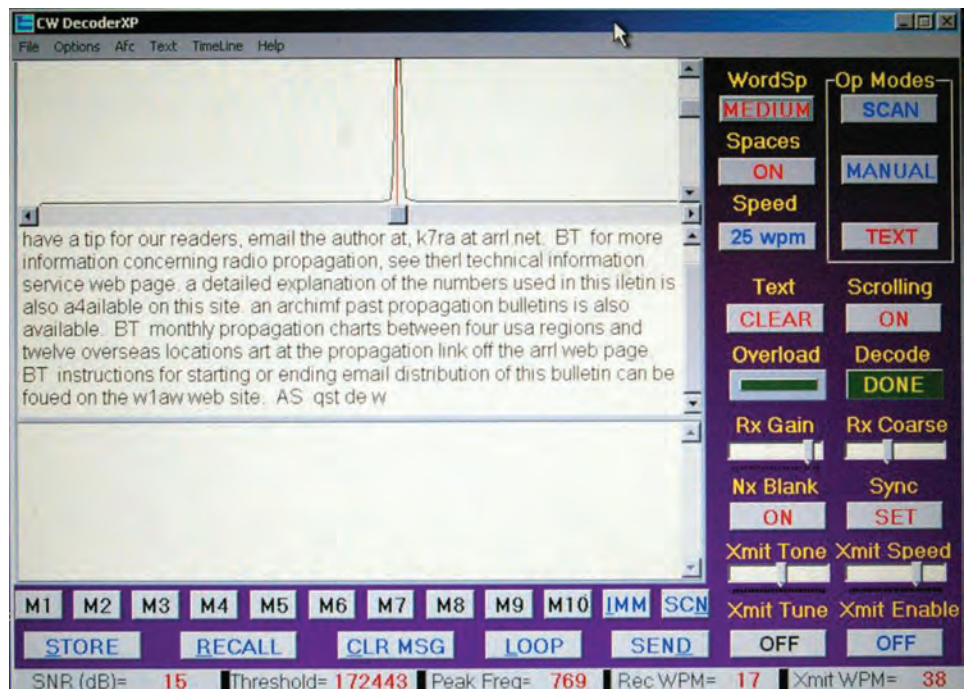


Signal Processing (DSP) filter can also be used to listen to code by looping it through to your computer speaker; thus enhancing copy by ear. The software has an adjustable threshold level for detection and, surprisingly, works well even when the Signal-to-Noise ratio is marginal. This copy program, like others, self-adjusts for the speed of the sender and handles faster code better than slow speed. I find it great as an assist when contesting. No pen and paper are necessary. The copied call sign goes into the computer log, the station is called and the contact is made.

All exchange information can be referenced on the screen. The application display can be set for "always on top" and sized big or small to allow it to coexist on the screen with your logging application. This software will integrate with AALogger.

### CWDecoderXP

Another program I have tried is CWDecoderXP. This software combines decoding and sending (by keyboard) in one package. The receiver is again connected through the computer sound card, but send signaling is by the COM





serial or LPT port on the computer. Sending with this application is via computer keyboard or canned messages. The screen presentation cannot be sized and may get in the way of other programs running on the screen. CWDecoderXP is a free download, however, so it's worth a try.

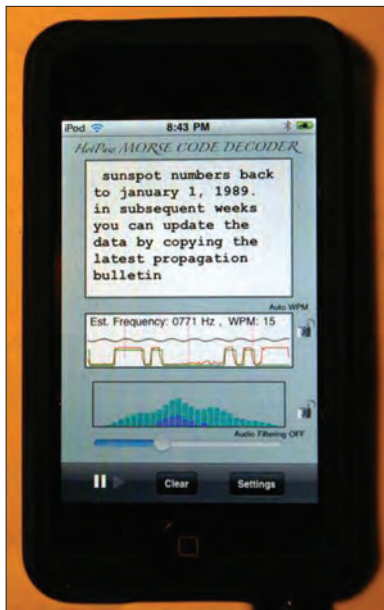
## MRP40

Yet another program CW decoder and sender program to try is MRP40; it is available for free download and a free trial period to use.

## IPHONE / ITOUCH APPS

If you have an Apple iPhone smart phone or Apple iTouch iPod, there are many Amateur Radio "apps" available including a couple that work as Morse Code Decoders.

I chose one that cost \$10 and it seems to work well even by acoustic coupling to the receiver. Here's what it looks like copying the W1AW bulletin.



## CW SENDING SOFTWARE

As mentioned previously, CWDecoderXP can also be used to keyboard send CW. The other CW copying applications reviewed are strictly for receiving.

## CwType

This software is a free download from the same Russian creator as CwGet. It will also integrate with AALogger. It offers rig interface through COM ports or LPT printer ports or "RigExpert" interfaces. Besides keyboarding Morse, it also supports paddles as a manual keyer. I have not actually used this application as it seems a little difficult to run on modern laptop computers that have neither printer LPT ports or COM serial adapters without using special USB-to-port adapters.

## WinKeyer

WinKeyer is a hardware product from K1EI Systems. Two models are available: one that works using a serial COM port and the other that has a USB interface to the computer.

WinKeyer is a PIC microprocessor-based circuit that runs using third party software. Many logging programs support WinKeyer integration with Function Key macros to make calls or are programmed with typical contest exchanges. WinKeyer also accepts iambic paddles.

Whether on the paddles or using the computer application to send code, the speed is the same as set by the WinKeyer speed control or software and thus the transition between the two modes of operation is seamless.

Because WinKeyer is an outboard process for generating code from the computer control application, code timing is never upset by other computer activities that may affect code sending on applications fully resident on the computer.

I have had the serial port version of WinKeyer for a few years and it continues to work great. I typically use it with the suite of N3FJP logging programs tailored for various contests and for general use. The N3FJP logging programs, besides providing Function Key macro messages, also provides Morse keyboarding with the F12 function key.

Often when I have a general CW QSO, I will keyboard with the "ZUT" application available from the K1EI website.

With this WinKeyer application, I can keyboard in real time without making a mistake and the guy at the other end thinks I'm a real pro.

All CW copy and sending programs are available on the Internet with a simple Google Search.

## **CONCLUSION**

Of the three code copy programs that I have tried – even side-by-side while receiving the same CW signal – the CWGet software is thumbs up for me and proved to be the most agile and reliable and simple to use. Notwithstanding, all code copy programs like good, well structured code as is typically generated by a keyer or computer sending at the other end of the QSO. If the code is from a straight key or a semi-automatic key, there may be difficulty copying if the hand-sent code has too much personality.

With contest activity, virtually no one is using a straight key and much of it is generated by keyers with canned messages. As far as interface to the computer is concerned, although there should be no problem interfacing directly to the sound card “line input”, some may find that products like the Tigertronics’ “SignalLink” will facilitate connection and level adjustment; it uses a USB connection to the computer. Using my iTouch application is a bit of a novelty, but nevertheless it works flawlessly with good clean code.

Although I do not advocate not becoming proficient in sending and receiving CW using the grey matter between your ears, for some Amateurs really good proficiency may be elusive. This is especially true now that we don't require having to know the code at all to acquire our Amateur Radio operating certificate. At least with a bit of help from computer automation, non-code proficient Amateurs can participate in the world of CW operation without knowing a dit. And who knows, many Amateurs may even acquire a love of CW when they didn't believe it was possible. That may keep the mode going strong and lead to a whole new generation of CW proficient Amateurs who can send and receive Morse Code all by themselves.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Norm Rashleigh obtained his Amateur Radio Certificate in 1963 holding the call sign VE3DVF which he still holds today. A year later, he obtained his Advanced Amateur Certificate. Since 1990, he has held VE3LC which was formerly held by Maurice Haycock, a famous and accomplished Canadian geologist, Arctic explorer and painter ([www.haycock.ca](http://www.haycock.ca)). Norm is now retired following a 36-year career in mobile radio engineering with CN Telecommunications and the RCMP where he was a promoter of Amateur Radio to engineering work-term students. Norm's ham radio interests have been an eclectic mix of all the hobby offers. Currently, he can be found participating in contests operating QRP CW. Norm is married to Ginette and has two adult children. Norm is a member of the ARRL, the QCWA (chapter 70) and RAC where he presently serves as the Vice-President Industrial Liaison.



# MEMBERSHIP FORM

Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club, Incorporated  
 PO Box 41145  
 Ottawa, ON K1G 5K9

- ✓ *The membership year starts 1 September, and runs until 31 August of the following year.*
- ✓ *Regular membership is open to licensed amateurs.*
- ✓ *Associate membership is open to all unlicensed radio enthusiasts.*
- ✓ *Membership includes a digital subscription to the club newsletter, the OVMRC Rambler.*

NEW       RENEWAL       UPDATE/CHANGE

Please print legibly

Call Sign	Surname	Perferred first name
Street		Apartment
City	Province	Postal Code
Home/primary phone	Work/other phone	E-mail address
Are you a member of Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC)?    Yes / No		
RAC ID: _____      Expiry (YYYY-MM-DD): _____		

Do you wish to order an OVMRC name tag? (+\$12.00)    Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Callsign for name tag	Name for name tag	

Full Membership (Not a Member of RAC)	\$35.00/yr <input type="checkbox"/>	Amount Enclosed \$ _____ Cheque / Cash
Full Membership (RAC Member)	\$25.00/yr <input type="checkbox"/>	
Associate Membership (Unlicensed)	\$25.00/yr <input type="checkbox"/>	

Circle your interests			
<b>Bands</b> Microwave UHF VHF HF LF and below	<b>Modes</b> CW Digital Phone EME Satellite Experimental	<b>Building</b> RX TX Antennas Test equipment Other	<b>Other</b> Teaching Speaking/Presenting DF/Fox hunting Contesting DXing Computers/IT Other

Signature	Date	Initials	<i>By initialing this box, I confirm that I consent to receiving e-mail messages from the Club.</i>
_____	_____		