

RAMBLER

JANUARY 2025



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NEWSLETTER OF THE OTTAWA VALLEY MOBILE RADIO CLUB INCORPORATED (OVMRC.CA)

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NEXT MEETING:

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 15
RAC HQ OFFICES, 720 BELFAST RD
AT 7:00PM IN PERSON AND 7:15 PM
VIA ZOOM

**MEMBERS AND INVITED GUESTS WILL
BE SENT AN EMAIL INVITATION
SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE MEETING DATE
WITH LOGIN AND PASSWORD.**

**OTHERS NOT ON OUR MAILING LIST
PLEASE CONTACT NORM AT:
VE3LC@MYRAC.CA FOR INVITATION.**

OVMRC AFFILIATIONS





OVMRC EXECUTIVE AND OFFICERS 2024-2025

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OVMRC Groups.io

Ongoing discussion

Group at: <https://ovmrc.groups.io/g/main>;

All radio amateur members and non-members are welcome

Ottawa Valley Mobile

Radio Club Inc.,

**PO Box 41145 Ottawa, ON
K1G 5K9**

OVMRC Life Members

Ralph Cameron, VE3BBM

Doug Carswell, VE3ATY

Bill Hall, VA3WMH

Ernie Jury, VE3EJJ

Doreen Morgan, VE3CGO

Bryan Rawlings, VE3QN

Maurice-André Vigneault,
VE3VIG

OVMRC Repeaters

- **VE3RAM** Limited coverage to Orleans and East Ottawa 443.700 MHz (+) DMR CC1 & D-Star Network connected to Brandmeister

- **VE3TWO** Limited coverage to East and South Ottawa 147.300 MHz. +, PL 100.0 Hz. Analogue FM and C4FM

Special Event & Field Day Call Sign VE3JW



LOCAL WEEKLY NETS (ALL CHECK-INS WELCOME)

- **Almonte ARC's D-Star Net:** Tuesday evenings at 8:40 p.m. carried on XLX197 and everything connected to it, including VA3AAR, HH 94152 & AllStar Node 564012. Dale VE3XZT presides.
- **Capital City FM Net:** VE2CRA 146.940 MHz -, (100 Hz tone), Monday evenings at 8:00 PM.
- **Champlain STP Net:** VE3STP 147.060 MHz +, (114.8 Hz tone), held Monday through Saturday at 7:00 PM.
- **Kemptville Amateur Radio Group (KARG) Net:** VE3NGR 145.250 MHz (-) CTCSS tone 110.9 Hz. Tuesday evening at 7:30 PM. Various net controllers, <https://ve3ngr.ca/net.php>
- **New Hams Ottawa Net:** VE2CRA 146.940 MHz -, (100 Hz tone), Tuesday evenings at 8:00 PM.
- **OVMRC 2-Metre Net:** Thursday Evenings, 8:00 PM, Club Net on FM will be held through VE3OCE 146.880 MHz (-)136.5 Hz tone conducted by Hugo, VE3KTN.
- **Phoenix Net:** VE3OCE 146.880 MHz (-) 136.5 Hz tone, Tuesday evenings at 7:30 PM conducted by Pete, VE3XEM
- **Pot Hole SSB Net:** 3760 kHz, every Sunday morning at 10:00 AM conducted by Ernie, VE3EJJ.
- **Pot Lid Net:** Sunday night, 7:30 PM, 50.090 MHz., horizontal polarization.
- **Former QCWA Chapter 70 VHF Net:** VE3OCE 146.880 MHz (-) 136.5 Hz tone, Monday evenings at 7:30 PM conducted by John, VE3ZOV
- **Rubber Boot Net:** VE3OCE 146.880 MHz (-)136.5 Hz tone weekday mornings at 7:30 AM conducted by Roger, VE3NPO
- **Upper Frequency Net:** Simplex 144.250 MHz using USB, Tuesday evenings at 9:00 PM conducted by Glenn, VE3XRA.

INFORMAL AMATEUR RADIO RESTAURANT GATHERINGS

QCWA Chapter 70
Breakfast gathering every Tuesday morning at 7:30 to 10:00 AM, Summerhays Grill, 1972 Baseline Rd., Nepean

Orleans Coffee gathering every Friday morning at 9:00 AM, McDonald's 1890 Innes Rd., Ottawa, K1B 3K5

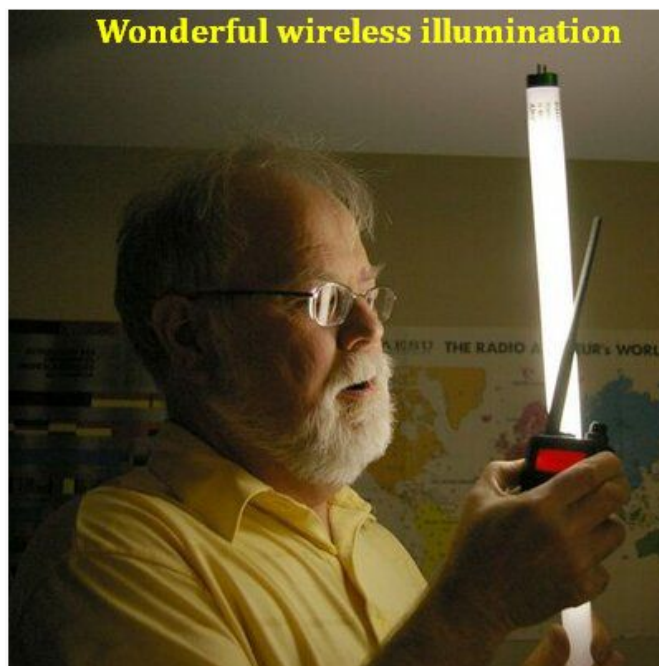
QRP Group Luncheon and Dinner meetings at Newport Restaurant are on again. See "OttawaValleyQRP" groups.io for details.

OVMRC monthly Breakfast gathering, 2nd Saturday of the month at Connors in Orleans, hosted by Pete VE3XEM



President's Ramblings

I'll commence this message by wishing everybody the very best in the new year and may this be another good year of heightened propagation as the peak of Solar Cycle 25 progresses. We will again be meeting for our January 15th meeting at RAC Headquarters. The presentations will be in-house. I intend to talk about the popular application called "HamClock" that is designed to work on a Linux based operating systems such Ubuntu or the "Raspberry Pi" OS.



VE3LC

Some may have attended the OARC meeting in November when I was invited to demonstrate the working of the application. HamClock can also be operated on a Windows based computer by first loading the Ubuntu Linux sub system available free in the Microsoft "store" of applications. I want to also talk about operating the January ARRL VHF contest which is scheduled on the weekend following our meeting and see if we can encourage OVMRC members to participate and compete in the FM only category. Further, if time permits and considering that several members are learning Morse code, I want to touch on operating CW by means of certain hardware and software techniques that work well together with contest logging software for folks wanting get in the action of contesting and calling DX stations using CW.

For the February meeting, taking the stage will be Charles Guerin. Charles is a relatively new radio amateur who lives in Orleans; he approached me last February to take his Basic after several months of self study and got his VA3CGF call sign the same day as passing his test with honours. Charles is a "software architect" by profession and calls himself a "serious tech geek". Since getting his ham ticket, he has embraced the hobby with on-the-air activity using his vintage but well performing Yaesu FT-757 HF transceiver as well as operating VHF and UHF with his two DMR capable radios and building home brew kits and gadgets. Charles has attended most of the OVMRC POTA events this past year.

Charles VA3CGF's presentation at our February meeting will be on the topic of building and operating a 40 W "sBITX" all band HF transceiver that he purchased in kit form, assembled and packaged up with a



Raspberry Pi4, touch screen and 3D printed enclosure. I saw it up and running and was very impressed with its functionality. A picture the "sBITX" radio appears below. He's now awaiting the nice weather again to try it out on a local POTA activation.



Roger Egan VA3EGY, now the president of the OARC, reports that their most recent radio course conducted by Harrie VE3HYS and Thane VA3TTM graduated the following 14 new radio amateurs:

Bert	VA3PXE	Claude	VA3VLW	Cristian	VE3TIQ
Cristi	VA2YAY	Jarrett	VE3FKA	Jeff	VA3WJD
Michael	VE3FTM	Ryan	VE3DPW	Stephen	VA3ISE
Thierry	VA2TMQ	William	VA3GFS	Xavier	VA2XRS
Duncan	VA3KDE	Myles	VA3MYZ		

Congratulations to all these new radio amateurs. Please give these new hams a warm welcome if you hear them on-the-air.

Our January meeting will again be a hybrid affair carried on Zoom for those that wish to stay at home and miss the in-person fellowship at the RAC office, Suite 217, 720 Belfast Rd at 7 pm.

73 Norm VE3LC



JANUARY 15, 2025 - MEETING AGENDA

1. Greetings and Welcomes to Guests and New Members
2. Approval November Meeting minutes.
3. Installation and Demonstration of “HamClock” application.
4. January ARRL VHF contest.
5. Chair reports
6. Door Prizes
7. Adjournment and Social Hour.

The January meeting of the OVMRC will be conducted at RAC HQ offices, 720 Belfast Rd at 7 pm. To get to the RAC office, take the stairs to the 2nd floor and proceed along the hallway to the 2nd door on your left.

****** Please bring some indoor shoes as outside boots and shoes will need to be left at the RAC office door to help preserve the new floors! ******

Also remember use the sign-in sheet, so the OVMRC can assess participation, with each meeting participation improving your chances at winning year-end door prizes!



ROBERT CHERRY VA3AOD (SK) 1948-2024



Robert was a retired civil servant, with great experience in administrative writing and contract work as a proofreader of books about amateur radio and editor of non-technical books.

First licensed in 2005, Robert was active on 40m SSB and local 2m repeaters as well as editing and proofreading this newsletter, the Rambler, for many years.

An avid radio amateur, Robert spent most of his free time pursuing this hobby which gave him so much joy.

Obit: [link](#)

**TO REPORT A SILENT KEY (SK) PLEASE CONTACT
MIKE VE3FFK@GMAIL.COM**

Silent Key Submission Guidelines

<https://www.rac.ca/silent-keys/>

..also please inform ISED

<https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/amateur-radio-operator-certificate-services/en/contact-us>



Kemptville Amateur Radio Group (KARG) Hamfest 2025.

**The First Hamfest of the sesason.
Shake the winter blues!**

**15th of March 2025, at the WB George Center
48 Shearer Street, Kemptville, ON K0G 1J0**

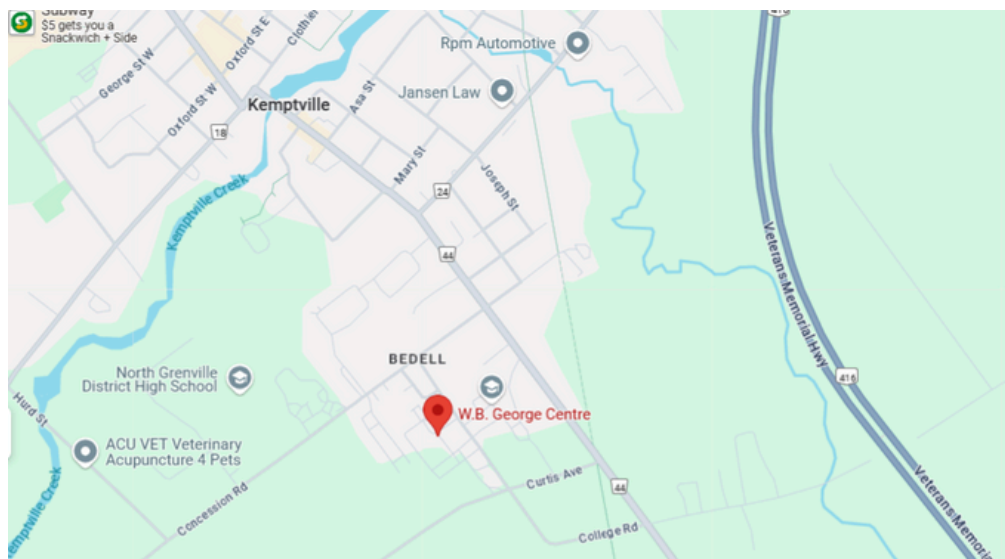
**Starting 7:30am for vendors, 9am for the general
public**

\$5 entry fee, tables are \$15 (includes one entry)

Talk-In on VE3NGR, 145250, -0.600, 110.9 Hz

We hope this will become an annual event!

**Organized by KARG - The Kemptville Amateur Radio
Group - <https://ve3ngr.ca/>**





XIEGU G90 REVIEW PART 2

USING THE G90 FOR POTA

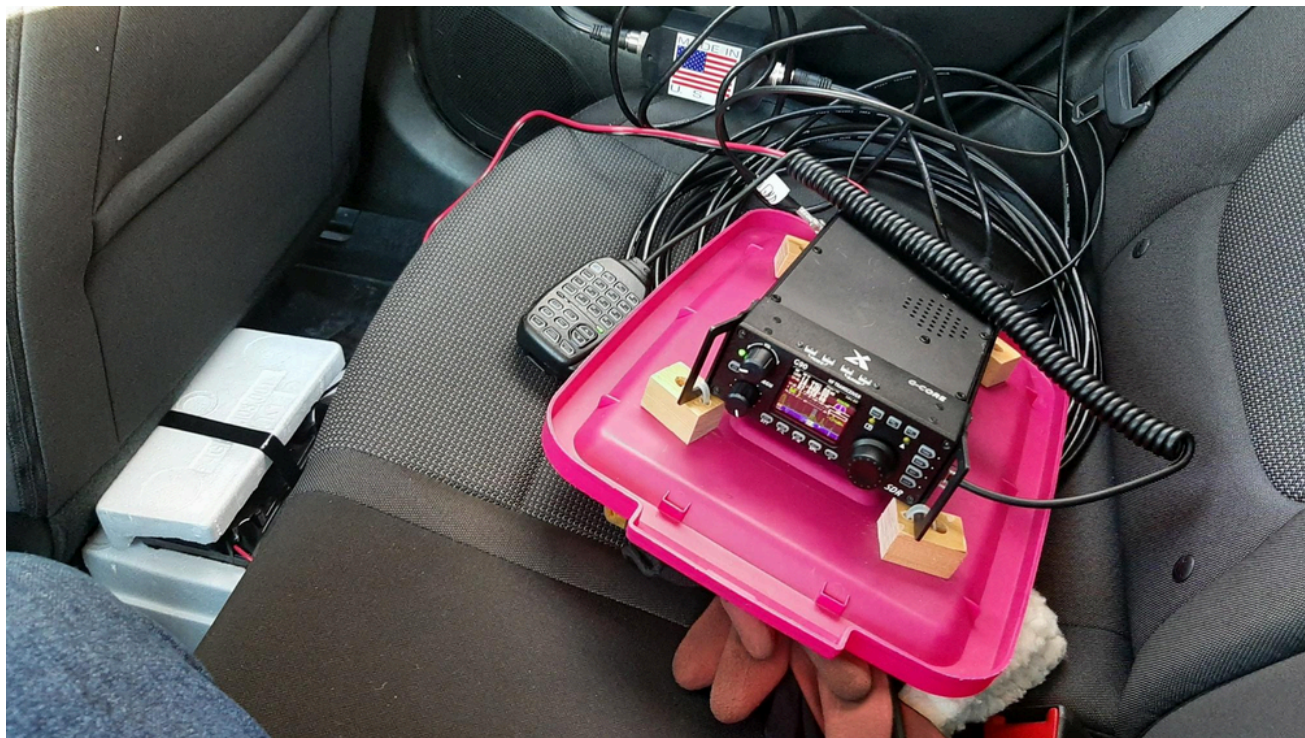
Last month I did a quick review of the Xiegu G90 transceiver and promised I would do a review of the G90 being used for POTA or Parks On The Air. I went to 3 parks on different days in December. Everything went well with plenty of contacts, and I only encountered 1 problem unrelated to the radio as I will explain.

In the picture below you can see my equipment ready to go on a road trip. The G90 is mounted using tie wraps on the lid of the pink container, and my antenna and all other hardware is in the blue container. The battery is a 14AH motorcycle battery that just fits into the styrofoam shipping material from something unrelated. The styrofoam will protect the battery from damage and keep the battery warm for better power. The 70 centimeter long screwdriver is my grounding rod. At \$11 it is a cheaper substitute for a real grounding rod. The bucket contains 650 feet of electricians' pulling twine. When used with a homemade arborists' throwing bag, the twine is an easy way to get antennas high up in trees.





The big problem I had was ergonomics. As you can see below the G90 radio set up on the tiny back seat of my small car on my first POTA trip. The temperature outside was -10 degrees with a stiff wind, so I am wearing multiple thick layers. I am holding a clipboard to write down contacts and I can't really bend myself enough to see the screen on the radio. I felt like I was in a straight jacket of sorts, and I only lasted for an hour and 40 minutes before fatigue forced me to stop the POTA outing.



With cold winter weather I really need to be in the car to keep warm. In future I may try to mount the radio in place of the headrest on the top of the front seat. Then from the back seat I should be able to see the radio and write on the clipboard at the same time while facing straight ahead. The screen on the G90 can be removed from the radio, and I may try this feature with my next design of radio mount to help with ergonomics.

For this radio review I used the 41 foot end fed antenna shown below. I picked this antenna design as it is nearly identical to the Palomar Engineers 41 foot end fed antenna I use at home. I have had good experiences with that antenna over the past year and have made over 400 contacts in 40 countries. The black wire going to the right is 16 feet of counterpoise and the light colored wire going to the left is the 41 foot antenna wire. The red box is a 9:1 UNUN I found at the St Albert hamfest for \$20. Below the UNUN is a snap on RF choke with 6 turns of coax passing through, used to block RF from going back to the radio over the coax braid. I wrapped the RF choke in shipping foam to prevent damage as it looks rather fragile. Normally this antenna design uses the coax braid as the counterpoise by placing the choke 16 feet from the UNUN.



In my own experiments with this antenna design I found SWR issues that could not be tuned out if the counterpoise was lower than 2 meters above the ground, so I used a counterpoise wire instead of using the coax braid to simplify setting up the antenna.



How do you properly ground a radio in winter?? I positioned my grounding rod screwdriver next to the car in the snow parallel to the dirt below, then poured a litre of water on the snow over the screwdriver to ensure a better contact. This seemed to work okay. Noise levels are much less in the parks than at my house in the city. In last month's review I mentioned the noise level was high, in part because of the volume control. But out in the parks I had no issues with noise.





The first park I went to was park # CA-1515, the Mer Bleue Bog Conservation Area. The parking lot did not have suitable trees for an antenna so I parked the car about 50 meters up the road from the parking lot. Setting up everything and getting on the air took me 32 minutes. Once I got back in the car and looked at the antenna I realized I only had it at a varying height of 1.5 to 3 meters. Since it was very cold outside and my fingers were nearly frozen I decided to try to use the antenna as is. I got 23 contacts in 1 hour 40 minutes or 1 contact about every 4 minutes. The farthest contact was in Wisconsin, and New Brunswick, the rest were between Pennsylvania and Delaware and Virginia. I started the session at 14.303 MHz but had to move to 14.286 MHz after 30 minutes to find a quieter frequency. The screen of the radio was not pointed at my eyes, so I could not read the screen most of the time. I had to give contacts a made up signal strength based on what I heard. The G90's volt meter showed the battery began the session at 12.3 volts and dropped to 11.9 volts by the end. I asked a number of contacts how I sounded and they all said I sounded fine.

I feel that I would have had more contacts if the antenna was higher up. After I packed up all my equipment and drove away I realized if I had driven 50 meters further up the road I would have had taller and easier to use trees that would have given 8 to 10 meters of height.

The next POTA session was 5 days later in park #CA-1516, the Mer Bleue Conservation Reserve. I put the car in a corner of the parking lot where the trees were more suitable. Setup time took 20 minutes from when I parked until I was on the air. My setup time was slowed because I snapped off the antenna wire end by pulling too hard on the antenna wire pull string. Weather was light rain at 3 degrees. The car windows fogged up badly due to cold and humidity.





I was able to get the UNUN at 4 meters above the ground, the antenna went up from the UNUN to 8 meters, and the counterpoise went down from the UNUN to 2 meters. My antenna wires did attract some attention. Half way through my POTA session I was questioned by a pair of conservation officers as I appeared to be stealing electricity and trying to live out of my car in a park. Fortunately they accepted my explanation and left after a brief friendly conversation.

For this trip I put the radio on top of a shopping bin to try to fix the ergonomics problem. I was able to read the screen now, but only if I twisted around to see it. I had trouble doing this while trying to write call signs on the clipboard though.



I got 72 contacts in 1 hour 20 minutes or almost 1 contact per minute. The contacts came in mostly as fast as I could write them down. I don't feel I could go any faster. I stopped once I had 2 pages filled with logs and the rain was turning to snow. I feel the higher antenna position helped bring in more contacts than the last session. The G90's volt meter showed that the battery which started with 12.3 volts had dropped to 11.9 volts by the end.



My third POTA outing was at the end of December in park #CA-1294, the Aviation Museum Woods Conservation Reserve. This is a rather undefined park, so I used the nearest NCC parking lot to work out of.



This is probably the best ground I have ever used. The parking lot was coated with 2 cm of salted slush and a heavy rain was falling on a 4 degree day. I am sure those noisy electrons were just being whisked away to ground by my 70cm screwdriver ground rod.





I needed 22 minutes to get everything set up. The antenna UNUN was 3 meters above the ground. The counterpoise dipped down to 2 meters and the antenna rose to 5 meters. However, the parking lot was raised by over a meter above the trunks of the trees so height really was less than I would have liked. I should have gotten the antenna higher, but could not due to over hanging branches. I did not try to re-string the antenna due to the steady rain and cold that was beginning to soak through my coat.



The G90 was set to 14.206 MHz and I got 33 contacts in 70 minutes, or about 1 contact every 2 minutes. Having the antenna higher would probably have helped get more callers. However band conditions seemed to deteriorate as I got towards the end of my session as I was getting fewer callers and the G90 screen showed less activity near my frequency. My callers confirmed conditions were poorer for them too. I should have tried another band, but by this time I was wet and cold and ready to head for home.

In conclusion the Xiegu G90 is great for POTA and I am glad I bought it. I was able to get many contacts. I talked with 5 contacts who also used the G90, and they all liked their G90s. The antenna tuner fixed SWR with a single button push. The G90 is compact, rugged and inexpensive. I would also recommend the G90 as a novice ham's first radio. However the screen is tiny and the radio must be positioned so the screen can be read easily.



Unrelated to the G90, my sessions showed what needs to be improved on my other equipment. The electricians' pull twine with arborists' throwing bag is a great way to put up an antenna in a tree, however I need more practice using them so my antenna gets more height. Finding more parks with ideal antenna trees next to the parking lot would help too. I also need a vertical self standing antenna for use in treeless parks. I am going to replace the motorcycle battery with a battery more suited to deep discharge use.

73.....Donald VA3ZZI

Volunteer opportunity!

Canadian Ski Marathon (CSM) in February

Ham radio operators at CSM 2025

Most of the ski trail used for the CSM is in semi-remote areas that have little or no cell coverage. The CSM uses commercial digital radios for health, safety, and logistics traffic. However, the CSM needs the skills and knowledge of ham operators to run a controlled net on the commercial rigs. When equipment or environmental factors make the commercial rigs difficult or impossible to use, 2m ham radio is used as a backup.

To comment, please send an email to Harrie Jones, VE3HYS harriej59@gmail.com or to Neil Herber, VE3PUE ve3pue@hambone.ca.

Tasks for radio ops

We need radio operators for:

- Net control - located near Montebello - net controllers MUST be bilingual
- Checkpoints - spread along the route - being bilingual is helpful but not necessary

Thanks! Neil -- 73 de VE3PUE, Neil <https://hambone.ca>



Quick Tip: Storing PDF manuals on your phone

You've just driven for an hour to your POTA site and completed your setup only to realize that somehow you enabled some weird feature on your rig that you don't know how to disable and it is impacting your ability to operate. What do you do? You consult the PDF copy of your rig manual that you previously downloaded and stored on your phone!

Let's face it, Ham rigs have become very complicated. Chances are that even if you are proficient in operating your radio, there are features that you seldom or never use and they are sometimes only one inadvertent button push away. Fortunately every manufacturer makes PDF versions of their radio manuals available on the web for download. If you are like me then you don't leave home without your smartphone, so it seems like the natural place to store a copy of the manuals for your most commonly used portable radios.



You can also make use of the Notes features on your smartphone to keep "cheat-sheets" for those rig features that you do use, but not frequently enough to remember where in the rigs hierarchy of menus they are accessed. I also keep notes on whip and coil settings for both my Gabil and JPC-12 portable vertical antennas. Storing all of this on your phone means that you always have the info at your fingertips when you need it and there is no need to bring along paper copies.

As an enhancement to this idea, I would suggest that if you subscribe to a cloud storage service such as DropBox, iCloud, GoogleDrive etc., then it is worth creating a folder to organize and store PDF versions of all of your Ham Radio related manuals in the cloud so you can access them from any of your devices. You'll need to download an app to your smartphone to access your cloud storage platform of choice. These apps have a feature that allows you to store a local copy of files on your phone. You can pick and choose in advance which manuals you have available to you when you don't have cell service at your operating location.

Cheers, Michael VE3WMB



OVMRC Net Activity, Check-ins for December, 2024

Prepared by: Hugo Kneve VE3KTN

OVMRC 2 Metre Net: VE3OCE 146.880- 136.5 Hz. tone,
Thursdays 8 p.m. local.

December 5	December 12	December 19	December 26
VE3KTN - NCS	VE3KTN - NCS	VE3KTN - NCS	VE3KTN - NCS
New & Visitors	New & Visitors	New & Visitors	New & Visitors
	Matthew – VE3QMB		Marcel - VE3MNO
Check-ins	Check-ins	Check-ins	Check-ins
VE3OTW VE3RUU VA3ODW VE3LC VE3GIQ VA3WEX VA3IAH VE3KJQ VE3RXH VE3NPO VE3FSN VA3PSI VE3LAF VA2TXZ VA2BBW VE3NA VE3ZZU VE3OKD VA3ZZI VE3NPP VA3HBL VA3CJO VE3KAE VA3LMA VA3EO VE3VIG	VE3RUU VA2BBW VE3LC VA3WEX VA3IAH VE3KJQ VE3CWM ¹ VA3EO VE3NA VA3PSI VE3NPO VE3BOE VE3ZZU VA3LMA VE3VIG VE3RXH VE3RRB VE3FSN VA3EGY VE3OTW VE3LPH VE3KJZ	VE3LC VE3RXH VE3KJQ VA3WEX VA2BBW VE3VIG VE3FSN VE3KAE VE3OTW VE3NA VE3CWM ¹ VA3EO VE3OKD VE3NPO VA3HBL VA3LMA VA3IAH	VE3YY VE3LC VE3KMV VA3JYK VE3NA VE3KJQ VA3CJO VE3KAE VE3RXH VE3VHU VA3WBR VE3OTW VA2XC VE3RUU VA3HBL VA3IAH VE3LAF

Notes:

1 – Cold War Museum, Norman VE3NPP at the mic.



OVMRC Pothole Net: 3760 kHz. LSB Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. local.

December 1 SFI:204 A:11	December 8 SFI:183 A:6	December 15 SFI:171 A:10	December 22 SFI:195 A:16	December 29 SFI:260 A:4
VE3EJJ - NCS	VE3EJJ - NCS	VE3EJJ - NCS	VE3EJJ - NCS	VE3EJJ - NCS
New & Visitors	New & Visitors	New & Visitors	New & Visitors	New & Visitors
			VE3RHQ ²	
Check-ins	Check-ins	Check-ins	Check-ins	Check-ins
VE3RXN/VE2 VE3LC VE3YY VA3PSI VA3IAH VA2TXZ VE3KTN VE3BF VA3EO	VE3JSE VE3KTN VE3YY VE3LC VA3IAH VA3EO VE3BF	VE3LC VE3EKN VA3PSI VE3RXN VA3ZLA VA3EO VA2TXZ VA3IAH VE3CWM ¹ VE3YY VE3KTN	VE3RXN VA3PSI VE3YY VE3LC VA3IAH VA3EO VE3KTN VA2OJD VE3CWM ¹	VA3EO VA2TXZ VA3IAH VE3KTN VE3LC VA3PSI

The "SFI" and "A" values are the Solar Flux Index and Geomagnetic A-Index respectively as reported on the NONBH Space Weather web site: <https://www.hamqsl.com/solar.html>. Values are taken within 30 minutes prior to net start time.

Notes:

- 1 – Cold War Museum, Fred VE3LAF at the mic.
- 2 – RAC Headquarters, Craig VE3OP at the mic.



OVMRC Pot Lid CW Net: 50.090 MHz. Sunday evenings at 7:30 p.m. Ottawa local.

December 1	December 8	December 15	December 22	December 29
VE3KTN - NCS	VE3FFK - NCS	VE3LC - NCS	VA2BBW - NCS	VE3FFK - NCS
New & Visitors	New & Visitors	New & Visitors	New & Visitors	New & Visitors
Check-ins	Check-ins	Check-ins	Check-ins	Check-ins
VE3LC VA2BBW VE3QO VE3FFK	VE3KTN VE3LC VE3QO VE3VIG VA2OJD	VE3KTN VA2BBW VE3FFK VE3QO	VE3KTN VE3LC VE3FFK VE3QO VE3VIG VA2OJD	VE3KTN VE3LC VA3IAH



General Links of Interest:

ARDF Ottawa



Go t-hunting with ARDF
(Amateur Radio Direction
Finding) Ottawa

RCJ



Volunteer radio ops help
scouts on the Rideau
Challenge Journey

New Hams Ottawa



Information for new hams with
an Ottawa focus

Editor's Note:

The Rambler is the official newsletter of the Ottawa Valley Mobile Radio Club Incorporated and is published 10 times a year (monthly, except for July and August). 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 and notices to: Alan at editor@ovmrc.ca
73, Alan VA3IAH

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Your Canadian Hamshack!

\$15 DISCOUNT TO OVMRC MEMBERS ON \$300 OR MORE