

WEST SIDE SIGNAL

Official Bulletin of Toronto's Oldest Amateur Radio Club

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Club Historian

Position vacant

Meetings

Meetings held at 7:30pm on the third Tuesday of each month, at the home of David VE3SB 1043 Royal York Rd between Bloor and Dundas at Kingsgrove Ave. No meetings in July or August. Visitors always welcome.

Club Nets

FM Net

Wednesday 8:00pm
VE3SKY repeater 146.985 Mhz

CW Net

Sunday 10:00am 3.567 Mhz

SSB Net

Sunday 11:00am 7.075 Mhz

Issue No.153 Oct 2012



Next Meeting

The Karecki Residence
1043 Royal York Rd at Kingsgrove
Etobicoke

Tue Oct 16th 2012

Tue Nov 20th 2012

Tue Dec 18th 2012

Tue Jan 15th 2013

Tue Feb 19th 2013

Tue Mar 19th 2013

CLUB NEWS

Only Bert VE3NR and Bill VE3PA showed up for the September meeting. Michael Durrant VE3PNX has been very busy lately. Bert, Bill and I decided we should celebrate the 75th anniversary of the club in style. They suggested having it at the afternoon buffet at The Old Mill Inn at the Humber river and Bloor during the week sometime next April. We debated about how to fund it. Definitely a \$40 advance deposit to ensure attendance but how much

to refund attendees open to debate. The club would make up the difference. Let me know how you feel about it. We just talked and talked. Bert showed us the new Reverse Beacon Network where software allows stations with VE3NEA's CW Skimmer to send their results to a website for all to read. Bill is eagerly awaiting his Elecraft KX-3 portable QRP rig and promised to bring it to the October meeting. President David admitted he often forgets the Wed FM net on the Sky repeater and also says he gets few check-ins for the Sunday nets and would like to see that change for the better. Nothing heard from Chris EQF or Phil FZL lately hope they are OK, probably just busy with other things. The 75th anniversary lunch sounds like a good idea, having never been to the Old Mill Inn I have no idea what it is like but I've heard it is very upscale and also quite expensive. As long as the food is OK and there is a good variety it should be ideal. At last I made it through on the 80m net on Sunday and was able to talk with David VE3SB, nobody else showed up and conditions were fairly good for a change, this current sunspot cycle has been a total loss, solar flux never getting much above 140 and very often below 100, not good at all.

DIY CSI by the XYL

VA3CBE

With that many acronyms one would expect some grizzly old drill sergeant barking out orders, however I will admit this article is about how the commander of this outfit located the interference to her kitchen radio by diverting from the camps usual routine.

The crime scene: Kitchen.

The victim: FM broadcast receiver, hereby to be known as “the radio”

To find the perpetrator we must trace the events leading to the interference before any convictions can be made.

I believe humans are creatures of habit. For the most part we do the same things the same way every day, keep a log of daily activities and you will see the same pattern over and over, yes there will be variations but for the most part it is a routine, be it coffee and newspaper, checking into a net, or perhaps walking the dog about the same time every day, day after day it becomes a routine. What does this have to do with forensics? Read on and you will see.

I love Sundays, and to kick off the day we always make a big breakfast, eggs, bacon, pancakes, toast, coffee and juice. One of our Sunday morning enjoyments is listening to the “oldies” on a radio station from a nearby town, it is not our usual station, we only listen to it on Sunday mornings, the rest of the week it is a local station for local weather, news etc. Week after week same thing, get breakfast cooking and switch over to the out of town station, but week after week the station reception was getting worse and worse on that frequency only, tune up or down and all is well. Perhaps the station is transmitting with less power?? The radio is under the counter and between the sink and fridge, shielded from the incoming signal maby?? I am a ham so adding an antenna to improve things would seem appropriate. Well that did not work, if anything it made things worse. Plan “B” after we get things cleaned up from breakfast I will take a better look at things, hmm, all ok now, conditions bad??

This went on for a few weeks until the routine got broken and things were done in a different sequence. One morning I was dog tired, could not drag my self out of bed early so sleeping in later than usual was in order. Nine o'clock struck and my wife turned on the oldies, crystal clear, strange she thought. About this time I stumble down to the kitchen and begin preparing breakfast, the XYL plugged in the toaster and the radio complained with poor reception and static, unplug the toaster all is ok. I fixed it she said, looks like it was the toaster all this time. Our toaster has a logic board and digital display, causing interference centered on our oldies station, The toaster is only plugged in Sunday mornings, boy did I feel dumb!

The Perpetrator: Toaster, convicted of interference to defenseless receiver.

The sentence: To be under house arrest and only make toast while supervised.

I did not solve this case, but I am sure in some small way my antenna had something to do with it! HI!

SHORT SCOTTISH JOKE

A man walks into a Glasgow library and says to the prim librarian,
"Excuse me, Miss, dey ye hiv ony books on suicide?"

To which she stops doing her tasks, looks at him over the top of her
glasses and says, "Get Lost - ye'll na bring it back!"

SPECIAL EVENT STATION - ON44CLM

ON7PP

The special event station ON44CLM will be qrv from 16/10/2012 until 15/11/2012. More info on <http://www.on44clm.be/>

The ON44CLM station is to remember that our town Knokke was liberated by the Canadian Army in 1944.
CLM stands for "Canadian Liberation March"

RAC BULLETIN 2012-045E

New Ontario Section Boundaries

2012-08-06

I am very pleased to announce that on schedule, September 1, 2012 the current Ontario Section will be replaced by four new Sections: Ontario North (ONN), Ontario East (ONE), Ontario South (ONS), and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The new sections are composed of the following municipalities, regions, and municipal districts.

I am also thrilled to advise that all four Section Manager Positions have been filled and I will circulate a formal introduction in the week to come.

Ontario North (ONN)

All of northwest Ontario including Manitoulin Island, Northeastern Manitoulin and the Islands, Killarney, the cities of Greater Sudbury and North Bay and Nipissing District.

Ontario East (ONE)

Algonquin Park, Renfrew, Hastings, Prince Edward, Haliburton, Peterborough and Northumberland Counties, and the cities and counties to the east.

Greater Toronto Area (GTA)

The City of Toronto and the Regions of Halton (including the City of Burlington), Peel, York, and Durham.

Ontario South (ONS)

Parry Sound District, the counties of Simcoe, Grey, Bruce, Dufferin, Wellington, the City of Hamilton, the Region of Niagara, and the remainder of south-western Ontario.

Please see attached map.

http://www.rac.ca/en/news/bulletins/2012/Ont_Section_Boundaries._Ver_2.jpg

NVIS Tests of Three 40-Meter Antennas

Bill Savage, K3AN

e-Ham September 12, 2012

The July, 2000 issue of QST Magazine contained an article by N6BT titled "Everything Works." The author laid out his ideas on the relative performance and enjoyment factor of different antennas, from a light bulb on a 4-foot post to stacked Yagis on a tall tower. He related his own experience as a newby ham, thinking his first antenna was pretty good until he put up his second one, and so on. He also described his light bulb antenna, mounted on the wooden post, with a ferrite bead choke balun to minimize feedline radiation. With that light bulb and a 100-Watt transceiver he actually completed contacts to every continent on 10 Meters. "Everything Works" indeed!

I've had some epiphanies of my own concerning antennas. I still remember getting active once again in early 1980's, with a used Knight R-100 receiver and T-150 transmitter. Upon bringing them home I was so anxious to test them that I stapled 33 feet of wire to the basement ceiling joists and ran a ground to the nearby copper water service entrance pipe. With the T-150's pi-network I was able to load that wire and actually made contacts on 40-Meter CW (at night) as far as 500 miles away, much farther than expected. The antenna was near an outside wall, but it was no more than four feet above the surface of the ground outside.

Another epiphany occurred when I found out how poorly a 130-foot inverted L performs on 17-10 Meters compared to a smaller and slightly lower delta loop antenna. If I had never put up the delta loop I would have remained fat, dumb and happy with the L, which I had originally decided to use since it's one of L. B. Cebik's, W4RNL (SK) "five favorite backyard wire antennas."

In some recent conversations and emails with local hams, I became interested in antennas for NVIS communications. Searching the web got me to some sites that attribute almost magical properties to very low antennas for short-range communication. Does a really low dipole outperform a higher antenna? There was only one way to find out. I borrowed some items to construct one new dipole, and pressed our Field Day 40-Meter dipole into service as well, so with my Daiwa 4-position coax switch I could quickly switch between them as well as my existing Inverted L. I present the three candidates below.

The Inverted L is a 130-foot insulated 18-gauge "stealth" wire running vertically up from near ground level about 60 feet into the top of a tall oak tree, and from there horizontally over to another tall tree. It is tuned at the base with an SGC-230 remote autotuner, with a ferrite choke balun on the feedline and the DC wires. There are seven insulated radials ranging in length from 25 to 50 feet, "buried" under a few inches of mulch (no grass on my heavily wooded lot). The total length of coax back to the coax switch is 62 feet. With the tuner, this antenna works on all bands 160-10 Meters. The SWR is 1.6:1 or less throughout the 40-Meter band, again thanks to the remote autotuner.

The traditional dipole is 66 feet of 14 gauge bare copper, stranded antenna wire, supported at the center by a tall pine tree. The feed point is 30 feet off the ground. The wires slope slightly downward a foot or so, toward support trees beyond either end. There's a ferrite choke balun at the feed point. The total length of coax back to the coax switch is 94 feet. The SWR measures 1.3:1 at the bottom of the band, is 1.2:1 at 7.05 and 7.1 MHz, and rises to 1.8:1 at the top of the band.

The NVIS dipole is about 65 feet of insulated 16-gauge wire (one conductor of a zip cord pair) supported at the center and beyond each end by tree trunks, seven feet off the ground. This antenna also has a ferrite choke balun at the feed point. In accordance with the article that described this antenna, I placed three 70-foot runs of insulated 16-gauge wire on the ground in parallel with the antenna wires. One of the three wires is directly under the antenna and the others are eight feet either side of the first one. The total length of coax back to the coax switch is 113 feet. The SWR on this antenna was remarkably low, measuring 1.3:1 at the bottom of the band, 1:1 at 7.05 and 7.1 MHz, and rising to 2.4:1 at the top of the band. To be honest, I was both surprised and puzzled by the low SWR at resonance, but that's what it was.

All coax is RG-8X. SWR measurements were made at the shack end of the cables. Even a hundred feet of RG-8X doesn't have very much loss at 7 MHz so I wouldn't expect the SWR measurements to be very different at the feedpoints. Only the coax run to the Inverted L is weathered (almost seven years now). The coax to the two dipoles has only been outside for a couple of Field Days.

Over the course of several days I made 35 measurements of received signal strengths on stations ranging from 55 miles to as far away as 650 miles. I also contacted 14 of those 35 stations and asked them for reports from my end. In all cases the three antennas were identified to them as A, B and C, to try to prevent "confirmation bias" (Google it) from influencing the results.

Typical daytime 40-Meter QSB, while not as great as the fading on nighttime DX paths, still offers a challenge to making accurate comparison readings. Once I saw that the dipole at 30 feet was providing the strongest signals, I put its coax in the middle of three positions on the antenna switch. Then I would switch back and forth repeatedly between the two dipoles until I saw a pattern. This process was repeated between the dipole at 30 feet and the L. I used stations checking into South CARS for some of the measurements, and in some cases they transmitted for too short a time for me to accurately read the three antennas. Those stations were discarded from the results. By the way, I found that watching the bargraph S meter display on my Icom Pro 3 was a lot easier than watching the twitching D'Arsonval panel meter. Also, the Daiwa coax switch survived the several hundred switch position changes just fine.

So How'd They Do?

The dipole at 30 feet, which I will hereafter call the reference dipole, was the clear winner.

The . Only three of the 35 stations had signal strengths on the L that were the same as on the reference dipole. The other 32 were less. None of the 35 received signals on the low dipole matched the signal strengths on the reference dipole. Also, all 14 respondents said the reference provided the strongest signal. Between the low dipole and the Inverted L, the received signal on the L was stronger 15 times, the two were equal 10 times, and the low dipole was stronger 10 times. Statistically that has to be considered a draw.

Compared to the reference dipole, the low dipole was always one to three S-units lower. The Inverted L was in that same range of one to three S-units most of the time, but there were three signals that were equal to the reference dipole and three signals that were four S-units down. The low dipole was as much as three S-units better than the L on the close-in stations (under 120 miles), but still not as good as the reference dipole. I have to conclude that, although it doesn't put out the strongest signal, the low dipole works remarkably well for NVIS communication.

One of my pet peeves is seeing a review of a new antenna that uses mostly superlatives to describe it. OK, but what did you compare it to? A dipole at 30 feet? A triband yagi at the same height as your new Whiz-Bang Mark VI? You compared it to nothing else? Then how do you know it's really performing well? After all, a light bulb was once used to complete the WAC award on 10 Meters. Yet no one would claim that's a great antenna.

Oh, you used to have a different antenna and the new one seems to work better? Were the SFI and the A and K indices the same when the old antenna was up? How about time of day, and QRN and QSB conditions? My point is that unless you can instantly switch back and forth between the antennas being compared, your results should be taken with a big grain of salt. You also need to run a lot of tests, and record the results of each.

Lacking this capability, trying to work through a DX pileup is a pretty good way to determine how well your one-and-only antenna performs. Can you usually or often crack the pileups with just a few calls, or do you always have to wait in line, calling repeatedly and maybe never getting through?

You're not a DXer? You can run the same test with any of the special event stations that pop up on the bands nearly every weekend. The recent Original 13 Colonies stations attracted some moderate pileups. How long did it take you to get through? Also, these stations usually give honest signal reports; not everyone is "five-nine." How did your report compare to other reports the station gave out? Listen for a while and write them down.

But like me with my Inverted L, you still don't know if something else would work better without putting up a second, different antenna, and testing the two. As the QST article says, "Everything Works," even a dipole seven feet off the ground. It can be a lot of fun, as well as quite educational, to determine for yourself what works better.

Ed note. NVIS "Near Vertical Incident Skywave" I had no idea what that acronym stood for but good old Google gave me the answer.

GOTCHA !!!

When Robert Whiting, an elderly Canadian gentleman of 83, arrived in Paris by plane he took a few minutes to locate his passport in his carry on at French Customs. 'You have been to France before, monsieur?' the customs officer asked sarcastically.

Mr. Whiting admitted that he had been to France previously.

The official replied, 'Then you should know enough to have your passport ready.'

The Canadian said, 'The last time I was here, I didn't have to show it.'

'Impossible, Monsieur. Canadians always have to show passports on arrival in France !'

The Canadian senior gave the Frenchman a long hard look. Then he quietly explained, 'Well, when I came ashore on D-Day in 1944 to help liberate this country, I couldn't find a single Frenchmen to show a passport to.'

CLASSIFIED ADS FROM UK NEWSPAPERS.

FREE YORKSHIRE TERRIER.

8 years old, Hateful little bastard. Bites!

FREE PUPPIES

1/2 Cocker Spaniel, 1/2 sneaky neighbor's dog.

FREE PUPPIES.

Mother is a Kennel Club registered German Shepherd.
Father is a Super Dog, able to leap tall fences in a single bound.

COWS, CALVES: NEVER BRED. Also 1 gay bull for sale.

WEDDING DRESS FOR SALE.

Worn once by mistake.

Call Stephanie.

FOR SALE BY OWNER.

Complete set of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 45 volumes.

Excellent condition, £200 or best offer.

No longer needed, got married, wife knows everything.

IKEA

A worker retired after 30 years loyal service to Ikea.

He was given a presentation box containing a gold watch.

It was in pieces with an instruction sheet on how to put it together.

ANNOUNCED DXPEDITIONS

Oct 16 to 23

RODRIGUES ISLAND 3B9SP

All bands and modes
QSL HB9ACA bureau or direct

Oct 16 to 25

WEST KIRIBATI T30PY

All bands and modes
QSL PY2PT bureau or direct

Oct 18 to 29

MACAO XX9??

All bands and modes
QSL EA7FTR bureau or direct

Nov 1 to 9

CHATHAM ISLAND ZL7A

All bands and modes
QSL LOTW or JARL bureau
E-mail requests with full QSO details
Also acceptable

Nov 3 to 10

VANUATU YJ0AFU

All bands mostly digital
Some CW & SSB on 6m
QSL NA5U

Nov 10 to 22

ST PETER & PAUL ROCKS PT0S

All bands and modes
QSL HA7RY