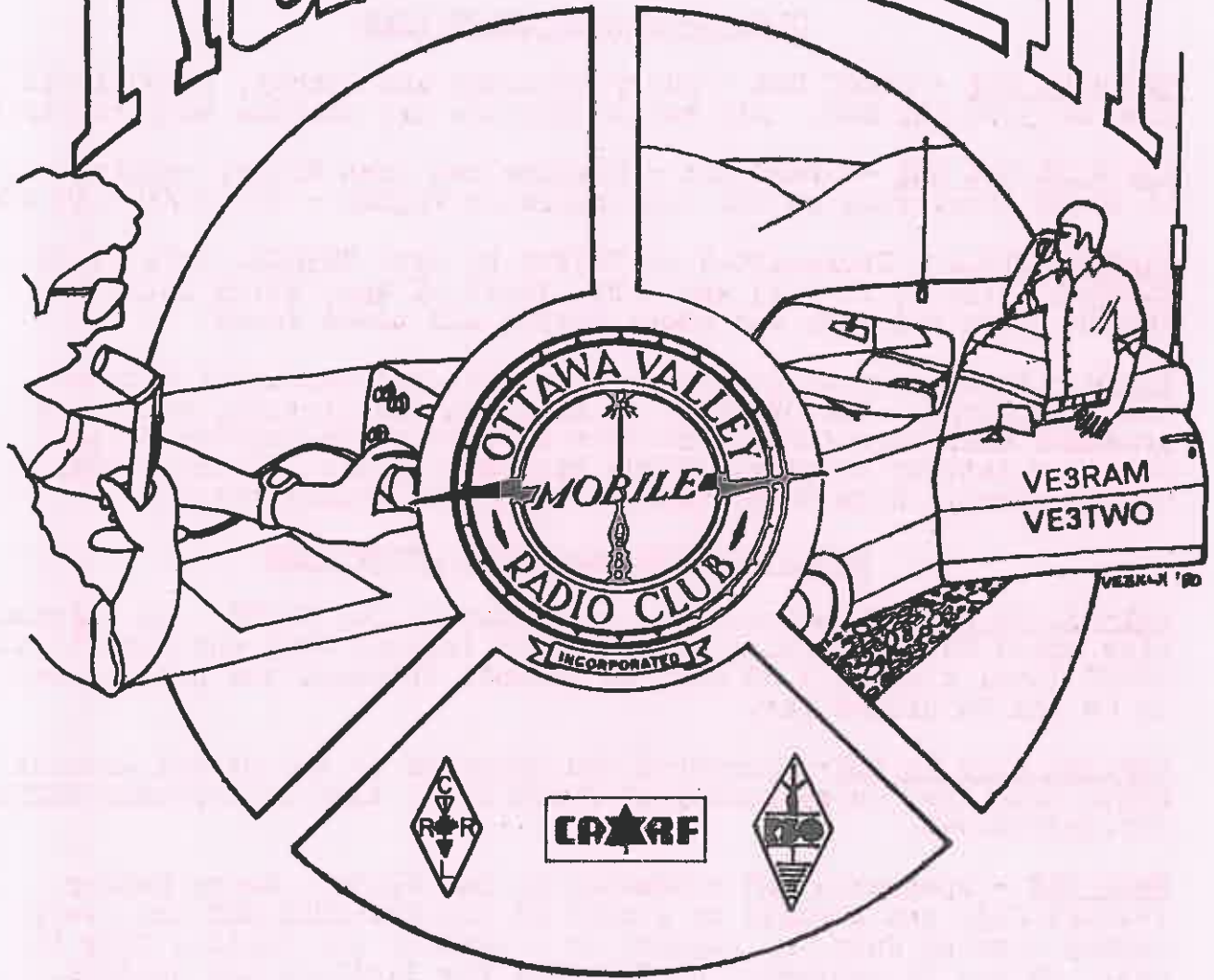


# RÄMBLER



APR  
AVR

1982

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THE OTTAWA VALLEY MOBILE RADIO CLUB INCORPORATED

1981-1982 EXECUTIVE

PRESIDENT	Russ Pastuch	VE3FSN	828-9235
VICE PRESIDENT	Tom Hayes	VE3ABC	822-2811
SECRETARY	Bob Daye	VE3MPB	224-1432
TREASURER	Ralph Thomas	VE3GG	729-9252
TECH ADVISOR	Dave Coutts	VE3KIX	829-2537
PUBLIC REL.	Bucky Merkley	VE3JRR	733-3429
EDITOR	Jerry Wells	VE3CLS	225-7374
PAST PRESIDENT	Ray Perrin	VE3FN	225-8132

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CLUB SPONSORED ACTIVITIES

POT-HOLE NET - OVMRC Net - Every Saturday and Sunday, 10:00 local time on 3.76 MHz SSB. All radio amateurs are welcome to participate.

THE WISE OWL NET - OVMRC Net - Ragchew net each Friday evening at 20:00 local time on the club repeater VE3TWO - 147.90/147.30 MHz.

CODE PRACTICE - Transmitted on VE3TWO by Dave VE3KIX. Wed. 19:10 20 wpm, 19:25 7, 10 & 13 wpm. Fri. 19:10 25 wpm, 19:25 13,15 & 18 wpm. Both sessions end about 19:55; all times local.

VE3JW - Amateur Radio Station of the National Museum of Science and Technology. The OVMRC helps maintain the station, schedules provides operators for the station as part of an Amateur Radio public relations display. VE3JW operates on all HF bands, both CW and phone. Slow scan Amateur TV is also demonstrated.

LOCAL AMATEUR RADIO NET ACTIVITIES

POT-LID CW NET - Sponsored and conducted by Ed, VE3GX. An informal slow speed CW net meeting every Sunday (except July and August) at 10:00 local time on 3.62 MHz, to promote interest and proficiency in CW and CW procedures.

CAPITAL CITY FM NET - Sponsored and operated by the Ottawa Amateur Radio Club Inc. every Monday at 20:00 local time on repeater VE2CRA 146.34/146.94.

SWAP NET - Sponsored and conducted by Ed, VE3GX. Every Sunday (except July and August) as a part of the POT-HOLE NET and every Monday (except July and August) as a part of the Capital City FM Net. Ed may be contacted at 733-1721 for listings and queries.

ALL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS BULLETIN GLADLY ACCEPTED

Membership in the OVMRC is open to all those interested in Amateur radio. Regular Club Meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month (except July and August) at 20:00 local time unless otherwise posted. Meetings normally take place in the auditorium of the National Museum of Science and Technology on St. Laurent Blvd. (south of the Queensway).

VOL. 25 No.4  
THE PREZ SEZ

April is upon us and spring is finally bursting forth, time to dust off the climbing belt and do that much needed antenna work. Remember, the season is short and it's much more pleasant to work in the cool of April than the sauna weather of July.

The term of the present executive is rapidly drawing to a close. In the next few weeks you will be telephoned by a member of the nominating committee enquiring whether you would care to run for an executive position. Give it serious thought, this could be your chance to change some aspect of the club that you don't like (including yours truly).

Field day is fast approaching. Paul Cooper, VE3JLP, has volunteered to be the coordinator for another year. If you plan on participating and especially if you can help set up, give Paul a call. Those who saw the video tape of last year's field day saw how much fun can be had.

Don't forget the spring auction in April. Volunteers are urgently needed to help set up, assist in checking on goodies, acting as runners, etc. The auction is extremely important to the club and it must be successful in order for the club to remain afloat financially. Also, we are going to have commercial exhibitors at the auction, so bring plenty of folding green. So far MacFarlane and Icom are coming, with a probable from Future.

If you missed the wine and cheese party, don't worry, another activity is being planned for early May to celebrate the club's twenty-fifth anniversary. Stay tuned for further details.

I have also heard, through the unofficial grapevine, that members are leaving the auditorium in a mess after our general meetings. Remember, we are getting this space through the good graces of the museum, so keep it clean!

So until next month, think spring thoughts and start those outdoor projects.

Russ VE3FSN



SPURIOUS EMISSIONS FROM THE T.A.

Good day. We'll try it this time with absolutely no typos.

I would like to express my thanks to those who participated in the show and tell. I also appreciated the way each participant carried on so well even with me taking pictures of them.

By the time this publication hits the street, the wise owl net certificate eligibility period will be over. I hope to issue certificates at the April meeting.

I haven't forgotten about the wise owl qualifying run. It should go down sometime in June or July. If, based on usual summer attendance, this idea gets "hosed" then I will probably set another one for the fall. For those who are wondering "what in the heck is a qualifying run?", it is a chance to test your code copying ability. We will have 3 minutes of text at a variety of speeds from 25 to 10 wpm. By that I mean 3 minutes at each speed. To earn a proficiency certificate it is only necessary to copy perfectly for 1 minute at your top speed. Text will be submitted to me along with a signed statement to the effect that no mechanical devices were used in the copying other than a pencil/pen and a piece of paper. If, of course, you decide to cheat, you, and you alone will have to deal with that cop out. The decision of the wise owl is

Final. The only thing holding up the operation is a computer. That problem should be eliminated in a few months. Keep practicing 73 and 72 (Happy Landings)  
VE3KIX T.A./ NH TOWN

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### DO SOMETHING

There is a bumper sticker that reads: "Lead, follow or get out of the way, but for Heaven's sake - do something!"

To those club members who rarely, if ever, attend club meetings or otherwise participate in club activities. This is your song! Do you realize that your lack of participation in this club represents a far greater threat to its continued existence than if you simply quit? (Do you know what a quorum is?)

Just paying your dues is not enough. The money is simply a little lubrication for the machinery. Your participation is what powers the machine, the Club.

If you don't take part, you are in the way. When activities are planned, everyone must be considered. Some people never participate but are highly offended if they aren't asked. What a waste of time. Do they want to be begged just to feed their egos? Add this to the ones who won't decide until the very last minute. It's a planner's nightmare.

All too often I've heard these people say, "I don't go to meetings because the business portion is too long and boring and the programs are seldom of interest to me". Incredible! Do they actually believe that for \$15 per year they can go to a meeting once a month and just sit there and be entertained for the evening, much like a movie or watching TV? If so, they've got the wrong Club. I think a Playboy Club might meet their expectations, although I understand the dues are slightly higher!

Entertainment from leisure time activity is attainable through participation only, no matter what form it might take. Let's take an absurd example: Picture in your mind an avid DXer as he walks into his Shack and sits down in an easy chair near but out of reach of the operating position. Notice all the equipment, the finest available, carefully and conveniently arranged. He has paid his dues. He sits there, looking at the station, waiting for something. Do you think he is entertained? I think not. Why?

In a short time, in walks his volunteer operator for this week, who sits down, loads up our DXer's favorite DX band and starts operating. As our DXer sits watching the proceedings, do you think he is entertained? Of course not! Once again.... why? That's right, he isn't participating.

Absurd as it may be, there are three important points in my example. He has paid his dues, he is not entertained and he is not participating. Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

"I don't like the way the Club is run." Horse feathers! The Club is run by you, not for you. You come to the Club, it doesn't come to you. If you don't like it, lead it. Join the executive and show how it should be. Or put it on paper and show it to the executive. Anything rational and justified will gain lots of support.

Cal VE6LZ ReY Klix

MINUTES OVMRC MEETING 18 MAR 1982INTRODUCTION

The March meeting of the OVMRC was held at the museum of Science and Technology and was opened by Pres. Russ VE3FSN at 2000 hrs. A number of visitors were introduced.

OLD BUSINESS AND EXECUTIVE REPORTS

The minutes of Feb. meeting were adopted as printed in the Rambler.

Past President - Ray VE3FN, no report, Secretary - absent, Ralph, VE3GG treasurer reported that the club finances were in reasonable shape. Current balance \$903.52, recent expenditures were as follows: \$25.84 postage, \$20.00 for the Wine and Cheese Party, \$75.00 rent for Cantercury High School (Auction). Dave VE3KLX, Technical Advisor reported that the code practice is continuing on VE3TWO each Wednesday and Friday evening. Anyone with donations for the club auction contact Dave VE3KLX. The club project a digital anemometer will be written up in the Rambler with price information. A number of stations are still in the running for class A Wise Owl net certificates.

Editor - no report.

Pres. Russ VE3FSN raised discussion on field day. Are we going to participate? There was considerable discussion. A convenor is required. Merv VE3CV RSO representative reported that the quarterly meeting will be held April 6. He also questioned if the club was going to comment on the proposed 20 metre phone band expansion by the FCC. The RSO Convention will be held in Waterloo again this year.

Bucky VE3JRK - public relations reported that the problems in the operation of VE3JW appeared to be resolved.

Ray VE3FN CRRL representative reported that the CRRL is opposed to expansion of US 20m phone band. CRRL would like copies of correspondence on proposed changes submitted by Canadian Amateurs.

Art VE3ZS CARF representative reported that there will be no increase in licence fees this year, but cautioned that we may be faced with increases in the future. Art pointed out that the expansion of the US 20 metre phone band is just a starting point for band expansions.

Bill VE3NR commented on the proposed band expansion and advised the members to write to DOC through our national organizations, CARF and CRRL.

It was agreed that the topic would be discussed at the next meeting.

Merv VE3CV asked how much it cost to mail out the Rambler. Russ advised him that it is \$21.00 per issue.

Ralph VE3GG reported on the auction plans. Rules are to be posted to avoid misunderstanding. Volunteers are needed to assist.

Pres. Russ VE3FSN asked for volunteers to head up the nominating committee - the silence was deafening.

The program for the evening was our annual show and tell. There were several home built projects including, a digital anemometer, a VHF pre-amp using a GaAs FET, a wave meter, a rapid NICAD charger - a converter and a plumbers delight 2 meter J antenna to name a few. An excellent display of home built gear.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 2200 hrs.

Bob Daye VE3MPB  
Secretary

## QUICKCHARGE - A FAST NICAD CHARGER

In summer 1981, I devised a circuit for fast recharging of Ni-Cad battery packs, such as those used in handheld transceivers. Available units seemed just too expensive, considering what went into them, or lacking in sophistication (a current limiting resistor). An inexpensive, reliable, easy to duplicate circuit should be a worthwhile accessory for the radio owner.

Synthesized handhelds are usually supplied with a plug-in slow charger as part of the package. This is a safe and reliable method of recharge, one which I use most of the time. However, there are some situations, ranging from annoying inconveniences to outright emergencies, when one cannot afford to wait overnight for a pack to recharge. Considering the current drain of a 2-3W radio from a 450mAh pack (standard), even keeping a spare on hand is no guarantee of staying on the air.

The circuit described here employs a charge/sample cycle, initially at a .3C rate (150mA), later dropping to .1C (50mA). The battery voltage is periodically sampled after the charge current is removed. This "trough" voltage sampling is more reliable in determining the end of charge than sampling with the charge current applied. The high rate will bring the battery up to almost full capacity in 4 hours, and the slow charge will "top it up". Subsequent continuous slow charging will cause no ill effects.

The circuit consists basically of a timer, a charge current switch, and voltage comparator and voltage reference, and a two level switchable constant current source.

The LM555 timer has a duty cycle of about 90% and an off time of about a second. When the timer drops out, charge current is removed from the battery. After allowing the battery voltage to settle for about a half second, the comparator is enabled. This voltage, scaled down by the potentiometer, is compared to a fixed, and somewhat arbitrary voltage reference. If a preset level has been reached, the comparator goes off, switching the charge rate to low. If not the high rate resumes once the timer comes on again. Some hysteresis (snapback) was added to the comparator, to prevent an endless high/low switching cycle, resulting from a drop in battery voltage when the charge rate is reduced.

The LM317 is a 3-terminal adjustable voltage regulator, used as a current regulator in this application. A nominal 1.25v appears between the OUT and ADJ terminals, and across a resistor (R11), which determines the low rate. The high rate is set by switching another resistor (R10) in parallel with R11.

The system dropout voltage, or minimum input-output voltage difference, is about 4.2v, due to the LM317 dropout voltage, its reference voltage, the diode, and the transistor saturation voltage. Experience has shown that for a 9-cell pack, 1.5v per cell can be expected at high charge rate near the end of the cycle, or 13.5v overall. The DC supply voltage should not drop below 19v under full load (200mA). The circuit cannot operate properly from a 12v vehicle battery. A fixed supply, or an adjustable one set to 20v, can be used if it can supply 200mA.

The supply voltage should never exceed 20v, and keeping it lower is advised. If charging a low voltage pack, such as a 3-cell calculator battery, with a high input voltage, more heat-sinking could be needed for the LM317. Otherwise, its thermal protection will keep the full output current from being supplied. An LM317, or UA78G/UA78MG (Fairchild) regulator can be used for higher supply voltages, up to 40v, as shown. Check the output voltage, and if

below 19v due to component tolerances, add a resistor in series with R17. The minimum input voltage is 2v above this output voltage.

Incidentally, short-circuiting the output should not damage the circuit since output current is limited to 150mA. For safety, insert a .5A fast fuse at the input.

At present, a limited number of PC boards (pre-drilled) are available from me at cost (\$2.00). If components are purchased at reasonable cost (such as Active Components), the board itself should not cost more than \$12-\$15. Adding a power supply, case, switches, and other parts might bring the total cost to the \$25-\$40 range, which I believe is still quite reasonable.

#### ADJUSTMENT

Only the trimpot needs adjustment to set the cutoff voltage. If two different cutoff voltages are needed, include R15 and S2.

The fastest method is to use a fully charged pack. Set the wiper of the pot down near the ground end, and start charging the pack. The red LED should be on constantly, and the green one should blink out every few seconds. Turn the pot upwards in small steps (1/10 turn) and wait for each dropout, until the red LED goes off.

Alternatively, use a pack which is completely discharged. Check it first with a voltmeter, to detect any bad cells, remembering that the open-circuit discharged voltage per cell is about 1.2v. Any cells which will not charge will ultimately cause the pack to be ruined, since the total pack voltage will never reach the cutoff point. Adjust the pot wiper to the bottom as before, and set the pack on charge, leaving it for 4 hours. Don't go away and forget about it! If you do, it will be damaged. Make the same adjustment as in the first case.

The charger may be set on manual slow charge by closing S1. When open, the charger functions in the automatic mode. If pin 6 of the LM339 is pulled up to 12v, a fast manual charge rate is set. This is not recommended so it is not indicated on the schematic.

David Harris  
VE3KMV

#### Editor Note;

Limited copies of the original schematic are available for anyone intending to build the Nicad Charger. Contact the Editor- I'm not too sure how well the attached schematic will turn out

Jerry VE3CJS

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#### SPECIAL NOTICE

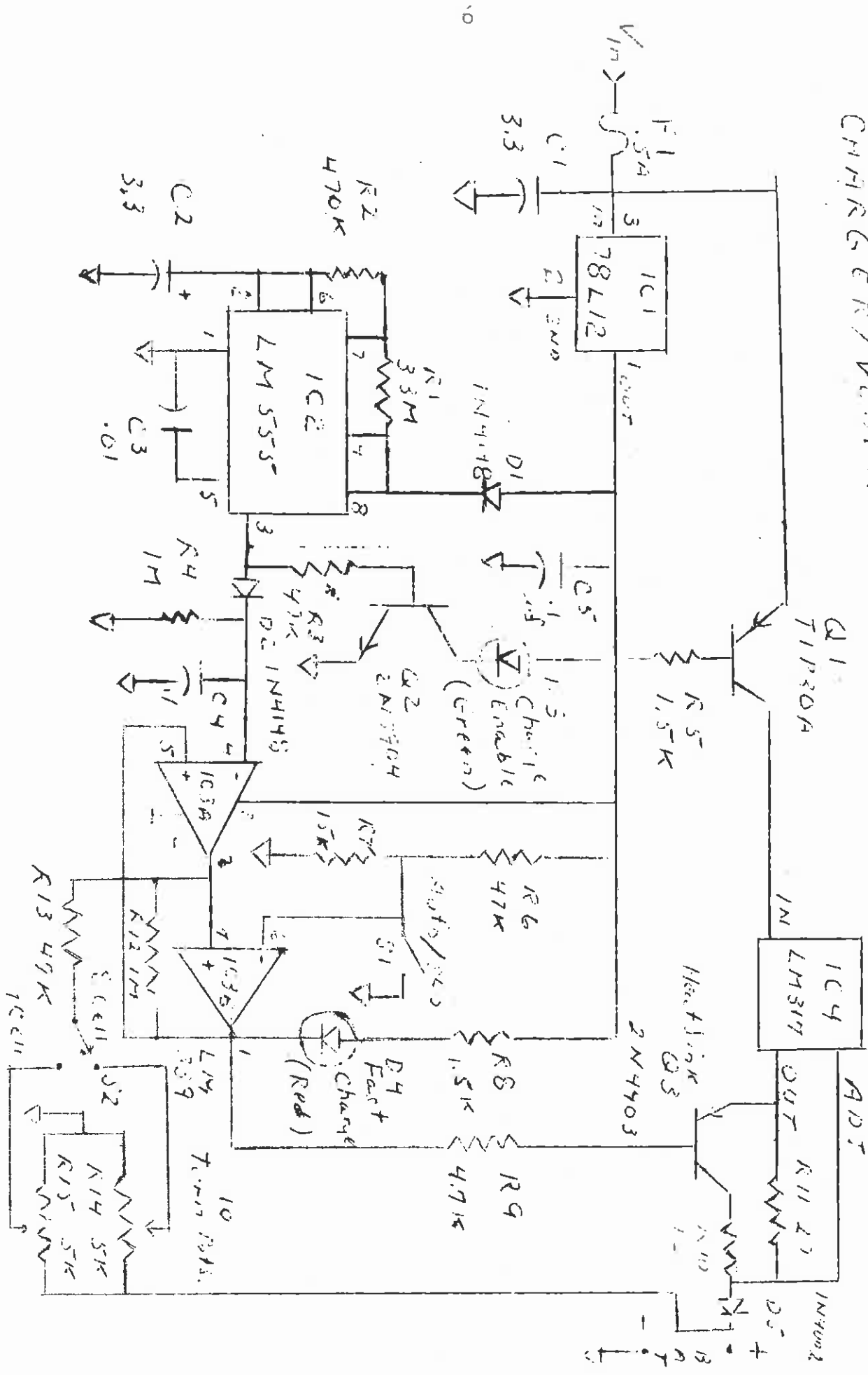
The Smith Falls Amateur Radio Club will operate a special events station C23SFK on all bands from May 22 to June 7, to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Rideau Canal linking Ottawa and Kingston. QSL cards will be available.

The Smith Falls Repeater is back on the air, VE3RLR 147.81-147.21...

DON'T FORGET THE AUCTION.....APRIL 17



# FAST NICHIE CHARGER / V<sub>BE</sub> 3 RMV





MEXICAN MADNESS OR  
MOLTAZUMA'S REVENGE IN ONE EASY LESSON.

Hey gringo, I hear you meesed the beeg wine and cheese party. Not to worry, that was only the first fiesta to celebrate the OVMRC's twenty-fifth anniversary. Get your mouth ready for a real taste treat.

On the 8th of May, the executive is organizing an outing to one of the best Mexican restaurants in Ottawa. Anyone who is into Mexican food will tell you that food at Las Besis is superb and reasonably priced. For those of weaker constitution, have no fear, Mexican food also comes in less firey mextures.

So mark the date on your calendar and let me know if you're interested. Further details at the April general meeting.

Russ VE3FSN



CLUB PROJECT

At long last I have determined the cost of the project. The anemometer works out to \$40, so come to the next club meeting with either cash or cheque. The parts package should be ready in May and will include the PC boards and electronic components which mount on them. As there are a million ways to design the sensor, that is left to you.

Russ VE3FSN



EDITORIAL

One of the interesting side benefits of amateur radio is the geography lessons we get when we have the opportunity of talking to fellow amateurs throughout the world. Like most other amateurs I enjoy finding out where the stations I work are located. An excellent source of good maps are those that are often included in the National Geographic magazine. Alternatively a good world atlas is nice to have. Recently I ran into a situation where I could not find a particular place on any of the maps around the shack. Let me tell you about it. It was Saturday evening and the hockey game did not appeal to me so I tuned up on the low end of 20. Band conditions were very good. Worked Basil, Switzerland, Prague, Chervenbreg, Bulgaria and Novokuznetsk in the USSR. Had no problem in locating the swiss, Czeck or Bulgarian locations but do you think I could find the USSR location. I must have spent an hour poring over all my maps of asia and europe. Finally I went to the library to look in their atlas. Still no luck. I asked several hams as the particular station is often heard on 20. Still no luck. I finally went back to the Library and looked through the many different atlases available. Still couldn't find the place. Just as I was about to leave I noticed a new atlas which the library had recently received. I decided to take one last look. Lo and behold, I found it. what I learned, and should have realized was that on older maps the place I was looking for had a different name. For the benefit of those of you who may also have an interest in the locations of stations you work and you come across UA9UCG in Novokuznetsk the older maps will show the name as Stalinsk.... Located in central Russia.

Jerry VE3CDS

THE LONG ARM OF COINCIDENCE Reprinted from THE 'Feedline' monthly bulletin of The FLAGARA PENINSULA ARC Inc.

I tried to find the entry in my log book, but couldn't be sure which one it was. It had been a busy week, and there was this long QSO we had on 40 meters sometime in early summer 1975. His name was Hank, he had a very educated CW fist, and he lived somewhere in Kansas. It was a real good ragchew lasting maybe two hours, and when you get properly involved, the time just flies by and it's one o'clock in the morning in no time at all.

We'd gone through all the usual pattern: the QTH, the rig and the power, the weather, and the garden was coming along nicely, the Kansas crops looked well advanced, and some chores had been done on the roof which let some rain in last spring etc. etc., then we got back to antennas, and the effectiveness of long wires, especially on ships, was thrashed out. I told Hank I often swapped comments with a ham on board a Texaco tanker shuttling between Galveston and New Jersey, with occasional extensions to Montreal and Toledo, Ohio, and he uses a long wire on 40 meters with his Yaesu 101, and nearly always top sigs up here in Oakville. And there was the time the tanker (15,000 tons) was struck by lightning going through the Eisenhower locks on the Seaway, and the hull was damaged making for a rough trip back to Texas. Well, Hank had been to sea in his day too, and this led on to ship design and hull structure. Then we were talking about those first welded vessels, the Liberty ships made by Kaiser, which were turned out like packing cases and made a tremendous contribution to the war effort at a crucial time during World War II. They held together, but rolled a lot in rough water, and were hard to steer. This led to reminiscing, and thereby hangs the tale, so stay with it.

When the British were pushed back nearly to Cairo in 1942, the desert radar units that got out of the fiasco formed a reserve base at Amman, Jordan. There was much panic and unseemly haste in the rush from Egypt. And those in high places decreed more protection should be provided for the oil rich countries of Iraq and Iran, and the wells and refineries therein, and indeed the threat did seem ominous, except the Axis supply lines were much too long for further advance.

And thus our unit was despatched to the Persian Gulf in the late summer of 1942 (so unlike the movie). We were to establish 25 miles south of Abadan, very close to the northern tip of the gulf, and a mile or so from the east bank of the Shatt el Arab river, at Khosrowabad, a pumping station site. The unit for low fliers and surface craft was on the other side and upriver a few miles at Kharamshar, where the Fleet Air Arm also had some patrol craft and a few old seaplanes. There were 3 or 4 other stations dotted around inland, and Sector Operations was located near Abadan, the vital refinery centre.

It was the beginning of six months of boredom and discomfort. Apart from three scares that Jap submarines had been spotted in the gulf (never confirmed for sure), we didn't plot anything much except the navy patrols down the coast, Transport Command enroute to India and the Far East, training flights out of Snaiba, Iraq, across the border, and Lend-Lease Mitchells, Bostons and Marauders being ferried across from Africa to Iran, where they were taken over by Russian crews and flown north to USSR.

we lived in tents and trailers, and operated in vans, Daytime temperatures the first few weeks reached 115 degrees fahrenheit, dropping to a low of 80 to 85 at night. The stench of oil permeated everything, swampy areas surrounded our QTH, the mosquitoes and flies were legion, and the food was grim.

And there was a mooring jetty at the river, two miles from the site, where seagoing vessels moored sometimes before proceeding upstream to Basra or Abadan. Just before Christmas 1942, a Liberty ship pulled in there with supplies for Persia and Iraq Command, as it was then known, and the Stars and Stripes flew at its masthead. And our commanding officer paid a courtesy visit to the ship's captain. This culminated in an invitation to a Christmas dinner and other jovialities on Christmas Eve, on board this visitor from the outside world.

Everyone went except the duty watch. There were 35 on the station, and five remained behind. The air conditioned splendour of the Liberty ship, its baths and running water, its clean modernity, sweet potatoes, plum pudding, accompanied by bourbon and the beer that make Milwaukee famous, meant more than paradise to desert dwellers like us, with our jaded stomachs, and starved intellects.

We took over the ship's mess deck, the entire ship's crew and we crammed in together. Three of us shared a table with the second mate and two deckhands. The captain welcomed us from his table, where he sat with the ship's officers and our two officers. Whilst stuffing till we could hardly move, we exchanged jokes and souvenirs with each other. They were the first Americans we had come across, though some of us had been in the war two or three years already. It was a heartening experience. Their contagious good nature and generosity, the cool comfort of the room, the smell of cigars, the jokes and back-slapping, the old songs and dreams of a white Christmas, all combined to make it an evening we would all remember for a long time through the many rough deals that still lay ahead.

Today, all these years later, I can only recall the faces of the captain, the second mate, and one of the deckhands, the rest of our allies have all dissolved into the mists of time. There were nine at the captain's table. Resplendent in warm weather uniform, two of these were radio officers, and the junior of these was Hank, he who was destined to become the ham with the educated fist.

I can't remember how he looked then, nor could he recall seeing me, but the realization that we were there together on that ship, for just 3 hours, 33 years earlier, was the climax of our QSO that summer. We stuttered and stumbled on our bugs in disbelief, and the present disappeared from our minds for a few rare minutes.

Our station went QRT and pulled out of Khosrowabad in March 1943. We spent a stint in Haifa, Palestine, then dragged back to Cairo for refresher courses and refitting. Eventually a new unit was formed and many of us retraced our steps back across North Africa, ending up in Italy, several months later. The Liberty ship too, went its way, where, I know not -- a ship that passed in the night!

And a thousand other events, some sad, some happy, and thirty years more living, pushed Christmas 1942 to the farther recesses of my mind, where it became covered with the dust of succeeding happenings and experiences.....until summer, 1975.

That Christmas Eve, we never really noticed each other in the crowd, and it's not likely we will ever meet, but just for a short while on 40 metres, with aits and dahs, Hank and I rolled back the curtain, and relived some of that comradeship and enjoyment, which meant so much to us, so long ago.

And ham radio did it!

Two ghosts from Christmas Past -  
They come and go so fast.  
Two pairs of feet from Persia's heat  
To shady Oakville, Kansas wheat.  
How did we meet again?  
Or was it only then?  
You never know with radio,  
GL CUAGN.

Bill VE3HGJ

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AUCTION...AUCTION.....AUCTION.....AUCTION.....

The Time; Starts at 0900, Flea market until 1130 along with registration of auction items.

The place, Canterbury high school

The date; April 17... April 17..... april 17

Bring lots of money...Bring your auction items too, now is the time to get ready.....

Auction starts at 1200 Refreshments available....

Super Sandwiches built by your executive!

COME OUT AND JOIN THE ACTION

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APRIL MEETING- Apr. 15

Our meeting will be held at the usual time and place, that is the museum of science and technology at 2000 hrs. The program will include as our guest speaker, Gerry King, VE3GK. Gerry has agreed to give us a talk on his remote control HF station...should be interesting.

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K2C 3M1

Editor  
Jerry Wells  
VE3CLS

DON'T FORGET THE AUCTION... APRIL 17

BEEPERS By Laurence A. Bay, W1DOL

It is said that you have really mastered a foreign language when you find yourself thinking in it. Never gave that too much thought when I started using CW in earnest but I guess I may have arrived at that point somewhere between the time I found myself practicing code on road signs (tff-tff-tff-tfff/tfff-tfff-tfff/tff-tfff-tfff-tff) and reading the Morse on Hogan's heroes. I had even acquired a new interest in one of Beethoven's Symphonies and once in a while tried to decode the bass notes of my son's disco music.

I must confess I was unprepared when I discovered I was hearing Morse code in my sub-conscious. It was usually single characters like A, S or M. Trying to ignore them didn't work. Giving up all ham radio operation didn't help, either. I still heard them! worse than that, I realized I became aware of them some time after I had heard them. Twice I visited the shack, certain I had left the receiver on but that was never the case.

During the next several months, the phenomena intensified. Being somewhat analytical, I was able to discern a pattern and perform some statistical studies. Two facts emerged: they were more likely to occur late at night and early in the morning, but not exclusively so. The other fact was that the character's frequency of distribution was definitely non-random in nature. I was troubled to learn that this distribution matched neither the English language (you know, etalonshralu) nor that of any known language on earth.

The thought then occurred to me. Good grief! Could I be hearing signals from outer space? Had I been selected from all the people on earth by some extra-terrestrial intelligence as a communication medium?

Thoroughly shaken by this prospect, I decided it was time to seek professional help. I revealed my knowledge and fears to a psychiatrist. Several sessions ensued during which I continued to hear these mysterious emissions. After investing a sum with this psychiatrist equal to the price of a 5-BAND IKW RIG (WITH FULL QSA!), I concluded this was definitely the wrong approach since he spent more time asking questions about ham radio than he did asking about my own problems. Thanking him for his help, I decided to redouble my own efforts at getting to the root of my trauma.

Looking back on it, now, it all seems so simple. While trying to correlate the beeps with the time of day, I had determined that a vaguely familiar sound usually accompanied the CW. One evening, while sitting in a darkened living room, I heard, clear as a bell, E S E. Rusing outside to locate the source of the Morse, I saw a car driving down the street with another behind it, saying E E.

At last the mystery was solved. Two of my neighbors have three teen-agers, each with automobiles. Whenever they leave, they beep Goodbye in a multiplicity of cacophonous styles, each trying to outdo the other in artful and inventive expressions of love and affection! six cars! Six kids! Six adieus to Mom and Dad! Never mind the time of day (or night)! Off to work in the morning! Off for pizzas at midnight! Never were there more devoted offspring! Such examples of devotion should be heart-warming to anyone within earshot except a CW addict.

Well, that's practically the whole story. With relief, I resumed regular operating habits and, to make up for lost time, tried working 20-meter DX for 12 straight hours. I did have one interruption, though, when the psychiatrist called me to say he had

become so fascinated by my description of this hobby that he had gotten his ticket, purchased a 5-BAND 1KW RIG (WITH FULL QSK!) and would I please QSY because he was in the middle of a 24 hour operating contest and I was overloading his front-end. I agreed, feeling I had nothing to lose. Towards the end of our conversation, he asked if I had ever solved my "problem" because he, too, was hearing mysterious CW. I told him I was pursuing the outer space theory and that he should aim his beam skyward towards Pegasus and keep sending whatever he was hearing. Never heard him again on the bands. Did run across an article in the American Journal of Psychiatry a year later in which he described his efforts to communicate with outer-space civilizations.

Things have returned normal for me, though in my neighborhood. A pair of wire-cutters on a dark night did the trick. No more beepers.

Have you noticed, though, there seems to be a pattern to the blink-rates of turn signals? If you have any information, please let me add it to my data bank.

Larry WLDY

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